THE WEAPON OF THE STRIKE

ARCHIBALD PATERSON

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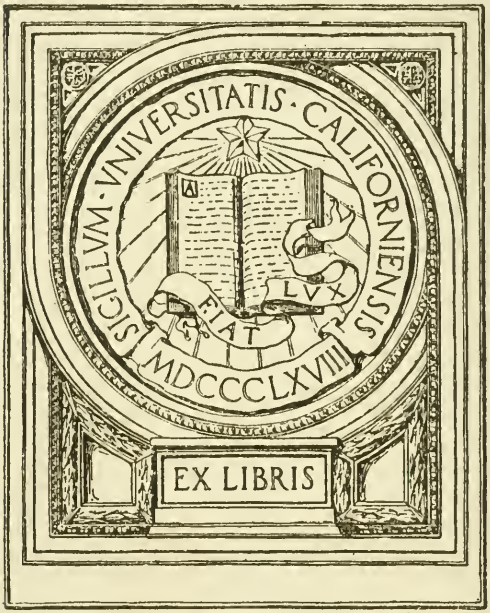

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The Weapon of the Strike

The Weapon of the Strike

By ARTHUR PATERSON

Author of
"John Glynn," a story of Social Work.
"Oliver Cromwell," a biography, etc.

With Foreword by
SIR W. PETER RYLANDS
(*Ex-President of the Federation of British Industries*)
and the
RIGHT HON. ARTHUR HENDERSON, P.C., M.P.
(*Secretary of the Labour Party*)

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This book is dedicated to the memory of The Right Hon. Frederick Huth Jackson, P.C., founder of the National Alliance of Employers and Employed.

Foreword

By Sir W. Peter Rylands, *Ex-President, Federation of British Industries.*

I THINK it can be safely asserted that if we leave out of consideration that element among the workers of the country whose only object is Revolution—and their number is probably insignificant—Employers and Employed are whole-heartedly in agreement in their detestation of strikes and lock-outs.

On almost every other subject they will probably have a different point of view, but upon this issue their interests are identical, and the result to both equally disastrous in its immediate consequences.

It seems strange, therefore, that no satisfactory alternative as a means of settling differences has yet been found. The difficulty is largely psychological. In less serious fields of life men fail to agree, either on principle or on facts. How often when we hear an *ex-parte* account of a transaction would it appear that the absent party must have behaved like a knave or a fool, and experience tells us that if a correct judgment is a matter of importance, we are wise to hear the other side's account as well.

This phenomenon is at the root of every trade dispute, as to a large extent it may be at the root of a war between Nations. Nothing can persuade either party that their interpretation of the motives and actions of the other

is correct, and their point of view is but little affected by columns of exhortation, counsel or advocacy in the Press.

However, it is a regrettable fact that even while it may be freely admitted that both sides to-day take a far broader view in regard to the relationship between Employers and Employed than in the past, the unconscious bias of self-interest must stimulate an increased rigidity in negotiations when the circumstances of the time are favourable to their respective contentions.

This, in turn, aggravates that suspicion of the motives and intentions of the other side, which, if only subconsciously, is deep-rooted in the minds of both Employers and Employed alike.

It is not easy to see how negotiations could be effectively conducted unless there existed some sanction to add weight to argument, a sanction which on the side of the worker is the threatened strike, and of the employer the threatened lock-out, and when finally both have by negotiation been driven to make their last concession, what other course is open if an acceptable agreement is not reached? So follows the lamentable stoppage of work, disastrous to both disputants, and involving incalculable Economic loss to the Nation.

Up to the present no satisfactory alternative has yet been found, and unfortunately with the development of the powers of the disputants, the consequences of trade disputes grow ever more serious, just as modern warfare far outstrips former experiences in horror.

In seeking a solution, we must bear in mind, first, that we are dealing with the psychology of the herd, as distinguished from the psychology of the individual; and secondly, that in the nature of the case each side is profoundly convinced not only that they are in the right, but that already they have conceded in negotiation more than in their opinion would be justified by

considerations of reason and fair-play, an attitude of mind which cannot accept without resentment any decision imposed from without by pressure or force, and may be expected to bow only to the decision of some tribunal in which its confidence is even greater than its belief in the righteousness of its own case.

I do not propose to put forward any suggested solution, but I am content to join with my fellow countrymen in expressing the hope that we may find in this book a better way, and that Mr. Paterson may succeed in commending an alternative method of settling trade differences which will command the confidence and acceptance of both Employers and Employed.

W. PETER RYLANDS.

Foreword

By The Right Honourable Arthur Henderson, P.C., M.P., *Secretary to the Labour Party.*

THE war thrust into the foreground many complex and difficult problems. None of these has become so challenging as the grave problem of industry, the importance and urgency of which have been seriously increased as the result of recent experience.

New ideas of social possibilities, of economic reconstruction, of community responsibility, of human right, and the sacredness of personality, have taken possession of men's minds ; and they are looking for a more humane form of economic organization, influenced by a new conception, new motives, and a new spirit. It must be obvious that if we are to secure the goodwill and practical co-operation of the workers, it is necessary to convince them that their effort and energy are being used as a contribution to the enrichment of the entire community. They must be given to feel that there has been a definite elevation in their status as workers, and that they are no longer regarded as mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, but as partners in the enterprises by which the nation lives.

The right of the worker is a human right, which recognizes that the energy he puts forth is a vital energy, and not the mere motion of a machine ; that he puts into his work—however mechanical it may be—intelli-

gence and skill, and, where permitted, even pride of craftsmanship. Then we need to bring into prominence once more the fact that the worker is a human being with a claim to a full life with freedom for the development of all the faculties he possesses, with a right to the enjoyment of those finer things of the mind and spirit which have so often been denied.

Denial of this right, which has existed longer than Trade Unionism, has resulted not only in the creation of the huge army of organized workers throughout the world, but has led far too frequently to the use of "The Weapon of the Strike," not as the last line, but occasionally as the only line of defence against injustice, notwithstanding the hardships and even suffering its use might entail. It is often forgotten that the workers were compelled to organize before "Bolshevism" was thought about because of the intolerable working conditions, and right through the period of machine power there has been a revolt against oppressive industrial conditions.

The "strike weapon" may be regarded as foolish and even brutal, but it is, after all, only one of the products of a system which provide a striking commentary on the principles and motives upon which the economic system was organized.

Industry has often subordinated higher interests to material ends, imposed conditions injurious to physical and social well-being, caused the workers to feel that they were over-worked and under-paid, the victims of exploitation possessed of a profound sense of injustice.

As a result of nearly forty years of Trade Union service, I have no hesitation in saying that the great majority of Trade Unionists do not desire to abuse the power of combination, and only wish to retain the strike weapon for defensive purposes, provided there is a clear appreciation of the purpose and function of industry

and that the relationships are such as to enable the economic system to provide the material means for a good and useful social life for all. Frankly, it must be admitted that this human claim to a full life has not been properly recognized, for, in spite of an admitted improvement in the general standard of life, the gap between the poorer and the richer members of the community is much too wide. We need a definite elevation of the status of the workers, and the conditions of their employment require to be humanized to the highest possible extent.

If the use of the " Strike Weapon " is to be minimized —and this is desirable in the interests of the whole community—a decided change in the relations between Capital and Labour must speedily be made. This can be most effectively accomplished by an organization of industry founded on the recognition of a real partnership, to be tested not merely by the amount of material wealth produced, but by its being fairly and equitably distributed so as to ensure a healthy, wholesome life for all concerned.

Then I am convinced that we require some form of permanent machinery which would formulate the general principles which are necessary to the proper conduct of industry and which could give expression to such principles as far as this was practicable, leaving their more detailed application to the individual industries or to kindred groups of industries.

What is needed is a Parliament of Industry, representative of the organizations of employers and of organized workers in the whole field of Industry, and with such authority as would render it capable of expressing, after full and frank consultation and co-operative effort, the mind of Industry. Something more than a conciliation body is suggested, though it could perform such functions, but I should hope that the main work

of the Parliament of Industry would be directed to the solution of those problems which give rise to conflict and render the use of the strike weapon necessary.

In the past, conflict has sometimes resulted from the absence of any clearly conceived policy in industry and because selfish and sectional interests have been the dominant factor. Parliament from time to time has been compelled to intervene with a view to the regulation of labour conditions, or for the settlement of some dispute, but even then, the difficulties have been increased because of a feeling that there was no real goal which industry was striving consciously to reach, or because of the absence of any powerful social motive in our economic life.

From a real Parliament of Industry would grow—given goodwill and public spirit—a realization of industry as a form of public service, better human relationships, and thus assist in developing industry that it might effectively provide the material means for a good social life for all. Under such conditions the need for the use of " the weapon of the strike " would certainly be minimized.

ARTHUR HENDERSON.

Prefatory Note by the Author

I ONCE wrote a play which failed. An admirer of the poor still-born babe asked a great critic his opinion of the work. He shrugged his shoulders significantly, and then politely said, " It is a great endeavour."

If the critics of this book will say as much they will do me honour.

I have endeavoured to express my conviction that the suicidal strife between forces, which has lasted for two centuries, can be ended if men of good-will on both sides of Industry will take their courage in both hands and make common cause for Industrial peace. I have the honour of knowing many of these men, and this knowledge encourages me to believe that I am right.

I have to thank many friends for helping me in this work, particularly my colleague Mr. H. I. Clipstone, Research Officer of the National Alliance of Employers and Employed. He has procured me information which has enlarged the scope of my original plan, and from his wide knowledge of Industrial history has made many valuable suggestions. I owe much to Mr. W. Morris Colles, Director of the Authors' Syndicate, on whose advice the book was written. I must also thank many members of the Alliance for facts relating to the present Industrial situation. Most of all, I am deeply indebted to Sir W. Peter Rylands and to the Right Hon. Arthur Henderson, P.C., M.P., for their Forewords, and to Mr. Samuel Gompers for his interesting, outspoken statement on the point of view of American labour.

ARTHUR PATERSON.

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Chapter I — *The Strike Defined*

THE Strike has no friends. Trade Union officials hate it because it means a serious drain on the Society's exchequer. Rank and file workers dread it because for them it spells hardship, suffering and want. The General Public detests it—now—because it has become a serious inconvenience and even a danger. Employers, of course, anathematize it.

Yet strikes are as old as civilization. Everyone looks on them as part and parcel of the Industrial System, and the chief difference between the Strike weapon of the Middle Ages and of to-day is that of Robin Hood's archery and a four-point-seven gun.

The reason for this seeming paradox lies in the relationship between Employers and Employed which has grown up since apprentices ceased to marry their masters' daughters, and Labour became a commodity in the Industrial Market.

Industry is not an economic abstraction. It is alive and human—very, very human. In the days of Dick Whittington it was a small baby. It is now a giant. But its great body is loosely jointed, and is neither well-knit nor symmetrical. In plain fact, it sprawls. It has never known what to do with its arms and legs. The creature is capable of great energy, but soon gets tired. It has never learned to take care of itself, and has always been subject to fevers and chills which, at times, become so acute that grave fears are entertained

that it suffers from organic disease. It has received an immense amount of medical advice of late years, but it has never taken any medicine except under compulsion, and such treatment has not been found to do it much good.

The situation in which Industry finds itself to-day is critical. The War strained its nervous system to the utmost, and produced a form of indigestion which has resulted in severe mental depression. The aftermath of War has racked its limbs with growing pains, mistaken by many people for incipient paralysis. It is feverish, yet weak. It needs nourishment, exercise, above all quiet, yet it does not know how to obtain any of these things.

The truth is that from its infancy to the present day Industry has suffered from over-growth on the one hand, and, on the other, an almost total lack of moral sense. It has mistaken mere size for strength. It has failed to understand that real power in a man or a community of men consists in symmetry of form and harmony of action.

The time has now come when, if this fact is not recognized—in this country at least—consequences must follow which will cause Industry to suffer reverses as much greater in proportion to those of former days as the late War has been greater than former wars.

There are signs, however, that Industry is gradually awakening to a consciousness of this need, and not only Industry but the Nation as a whole.

One symptom of this awakening is to be found in the searchings of heart which are taking place on all sides in regard to the real meaning and effect of strikes.

This, we believe, to be the crux of the situation, and we propose in the following pages to submit the Strike Movement to an analysis which will give it its true place in Industrial life and organization. We believe that if

this is fully understood, remedies can be devised which will enable Industry to overcome all its difficulties, and to rid itself of the constitutional debility which has sapped its strength for two centuries, and which to-day is endangering its life. We shall venture to suggest these remedies.

It is necessary, in the first place, to define a Strike. This has been attempted by most writers of Industrial history, but so far as we have seen with very little success ; a failure which has done much to cause serious misconception of the whole subject.

The definition generally accepted by economists is to be found in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xxv, p. 1024 :—

> " A Strike "—this authority informs us—" in the Labour sense is a stoppage of work by common agreement on the part of a body of work-people, for the purpose of obtaining or resisting a change in their conditions of employment."

This definition, even if it were sufficiently comprehensive—which it is not, as some of the bitterest strikes on record have had nothing to do with conditions of employment—is as useless to the student of the Strike-problem as a photograph of a corpse would be to an artist commissioned to paint a portrait of the deceased in the full enjoyment of life.

Let us take a common case. The foreman of an Engineering shop loses his temper, not for the first time, with one of the "hands," and " tells him off " sharply for some fault or slackness which the man denies. There is a dispute over facts, in which the language on both sides is unparliamentary. The manager is forced to intervene. He believes in " shop-discipline," and, without going into the rights of the case, supports the foreman, and discharges the workman for insubordination and misbehaviour. The workman in question is

popular with his mates, and is known to have a large family to support. They know him to be honest; they believe the foreman to be the reverse. They happen to know, also, that a stoppage at this particular moment will be extremely inconvenient to the firm. There is a meeting in the dinner-hour; a few speeches, short but to the point, and that afternoon they all "down tools," giving notice that unless their mate is reinstated and the foreman dismissed, there will be a general strike throughout the works.

It may be that, at this point, cool heads intervene, and a strike is averted; but, as a rule, the reverse happens. The management stands on its dignity, fearing that any concession would mean fatal loss of authority, and the men stand out for—what? This is the point. For what they believe to be justice and fair-play. They may be wrong. Their mate may have hoodwinked them, and the foreman be an honest man, though a little choleric. In any case, to paralyse the activities of the Company they serve because one of its officers has misbehaved, is not the right way to get justice. But it is the only way they understand, and they take it, though it has nothing to do with their "conditions of employment."

The same psychological motive lies behind strikes of a very different character. Trade may be bad, and every workman may know it. Unemployment may be rife, and "Stick to your job" be the Union's order of the day; but a sudden change in piece-rates; a demand for longer hours of work; a curtailment of privileges deemed by the men to be their right; and in spite of every warning from the Society's officials, against direct orders from their Executive Committee, and, more authoritative still, the wives at home, there is rebellion "by common agreement," the works are deserted, and the men are "out" again.

The great strikes we know most about appear, on the surface, very deliberate and cold-blooded affairs. There are conferences galore between high authorities in London; notices go out months before action can be taken. The public press takes a hand, and advice, cold, clear and copious as the deluge at Niagara, is poured upon the men from all sides. "Surely," people say when, in the end, the strike takes place, "these fellows are the enemies of order and good citizenship. They are simply out for gain at the expense of everybody else. *They* are the thin-lipped profiteers."

It looked like that in the spring and early summer of 1921. But if you happened to find your way into the coal-fields and into the confidence of the average rank-and-file workers in the mines, you heard another story. You found no cold-bloodedness and little sign of profiteering. There was a bitter, stubborn and deep-seated conviction that they had been sold and betrayed. It was the Government they were up against; not a foreman; nor a firm; nor even Employers as a class (except in regard to the wage-cuts); but the State itself, which, in their eyes, had perpetrated an injustice that, let consequences be what they might, must be fought to the bitter end.

This is not the place to pursue the arguments the miners used: we may do that later. Here, as in an indefinite number of smaller disputes, the motive which lay behind all others in the hearts of the men, causing them to fight, was the belief in the injustice of the Government and of the wage-cuts. Against these abuses they used the weapon of the Strike on a scale never before known.

A definition of a Strike is misleading unless it conveys some indication of motives. The only one we have seen which attempts this is to be found in an article by

Mr. W. Henderson.[1] A Strike is here defined as "a mass reaction to injustice."

It may be objected, of course, that many Strikes take place from much less lofty motives. Employers have a great deal to say on this point. No exception can be taken to the argument. We may even go further and say, without unfairness, that very few strikes indeed have been entered into from a single motive, however lofty. And this brings us to the right level—the level of human nature and everyday life.

A Strike we would define as the rebellion of a combination of workmen against authority, e.g. Employers or the State, for objects which they believe can only be attained by withholding their labour, and for which they are ready to make the requisite personal sacrifice.

We must not, however, leave out of account the Employers' point of view, a history of whose sufferings from Strikes has never been written. They see more clearly than anybody else the folly, the stupidity, often the sheer madness of Strikes. They can give instances in which selfishness and greed in their crudest forms have been the motives which brought the men out. Even where the Employers admit that the motive for action was honest enough, they will point out how the object could have been achieved by peaceful methods. They will give figures to prove that the financial loss to workers of the most successful Strikes has been enormous. We have heard an Employer, who has never been unjust to his workmen, exclaim in desperation—"Strikes are, nine times out of ten, mere acts of imbecility. They ruin trade; they ruin the employer; they ruin the worker. Then—what good are they?"

We must study their history, and see. Assuredly,

[1] *Unity*, September, 1921. 2*d*.

whatever may be their objects, and the services that have been performed through them to the cause of Labour's freedom, they are, at best, a survival of primitive life and the ancient days when, if a man had a grievance against his neighbour, the first argument he searched for was a club.

WHEN the first Strike took place nobody knows. The favourite example, of course, is the bricks-without-straw dispute between Pharaoh and the Israelites. We prefer the account of another, rather later, but of quite respectable age, in Rome, 494 B.C.

It arose out of oppression from Patrician usurers of Plebeians of the Legions after the Latin War. "The pressure of debt," the account states, "had become excessive and the Plebeians saw with indignation their friends who had served in the Legions thrown into chains and reduced to slavery at the demand of Patrician creditors." [1] The position was aggravated by the fact that in many cases the debts had been incurred through enforced neglect of the Plebeian's farm and homestead when he was on military service, and that the spoils of the nations conquered by the Legions had been divided up by the Patricians among themselves. So the Plebeians struck. Having finished up their little war, "the Legionaries refused any longer to obey the Consuls, and marched, though without any disorder, to the Sacred Mount beyond the Arno. There they prepared to found a new city, since the rights of citizenship were denied them in the old one."

This Strike was completely successful. The Patricians gave way at once, and we read that the Plebeians

[1] H. G. Wells, *Outline of History.*

"received the privilege of having officers of their own, Tribunes and Aediles."

Coming to our own country we find that the Strike was born in the fourteenth century. Then occurred the change in the land system, when villeins—husbandmen who were bound to give service to the Lord of the Manor—were allowed to commute their service by a money payment, and became, in effect, tenants on the estate.

The money which the landlord received in this way he used to hire free labourers, the nucleus of whom—for these were the days when every man without a cottage or holding of his own was a serf—was supplied by the poor villeins, who hired themselves out to richer neighbours in leisure hours. Gradually these part-time workers were joined by villeins who had thrown up their holdings altogether, and by serfs who had escaped from a Manor and migrated. Thus, through the introduction of exchange by money, instead of in kind and in personal service, the hiring of men by Employers for wages began on the land, which was then, of course, the principal Industry of the country.

Money was a precious thing in those days. Twopence bought a whole capon, and eggs were fifteen a penny. The rates of wages, however, corresponded. It is recorded that in the Manor of Bernholme, Sussex, the villeins conducted harrowing for their lord for two days, receiving three meals a day. When the profit and loss of the transaction was worked out it was found that the food of the workers cost 5*d.* and the work they did was only worth 4*d.* A lock-out followed on that estate.

By the middle of the fourteenth century the payment of dues by money and the service of free labour paid for by money was settling down gradually into a regular custom, though by no means universal. Then, in 1348,

came the Black Death, which swept the country and decimated the population, especially the poorer classes.

This catastrophe, though it did not create the system of "Capital and Labour," as sometimes stated, quickened its progress, and the number of manors where services by labour were required increased, and commutations for money payment shrank considerably. With a corresponding increase, however, of agricultural population in succeeding generations, a certain reaction took place. Nevertheless, it was in the fourteenth century, and after the Plague had caused free Labour to realize a good wage-return for service, that Industry as we know it to-day was born.

The Plague, which lasted fourteen months, is said to have killed half the population of the country. As a consequence villeins who had given up their holdings, emancipated serfs, and all others in agriculture who had labour to sell for money, now had the time of their lives.

The rise in wages was a hundred per cent. Reapers, whose statutory rate of wages had been 2*d.* to 3*d.* per day, now got 5*d.* and even 6*d.*; and, according to the Reading chronicler—"The Labourers worked less, and the work was worse done."[1] He must have been a farmer of the old school. But who can say, after this, that the "grinding capitalist class" is a product of modern life?

Such prosperity on the part of hired labour inspired the farmers—otherwise villeins who held land and had to pay most of the results of their labour to their landlord—to refuse to pay their dues of service.

All persons, indeed, who wanted to procure the labour of others, found the market against them. This caused an upheaval in mediæval society. The old laws which held the landless labourer in serfdom, and the small

[1] Lipson, *Economic History*, p. 89.

copyholder in Villeinage to an overlord, were broken everywhere, because the scarcity of labour was such that the landlords themselves welcomed fugitive serfs from other counties, and even established them as villeins on their own estates.

Nevertheless, though the old slave laws were broken down and became obsolete in many parts of the country within the century following the Black Death, it was only after a desperate and bitter struggle. The masters stubbornly attempted, and successfully up to a point, to squeeze the same dues out of the free-men as had been forced from the villein when he was tied down by necessity to his native village. The result was that the villeins and the free labourers, now intermixed socially as well as industrially, revolted against the whole system of dues and taxes upon the proceeds of their labour. Strikes, undoubtedly, took place wholesale. But they had one common feature—the strikers ran away and found better service under new masters. The lords, in their extremity, took refuge in new laws. An "Ordinance of Labour" was issued in 1349 stating that "Workmen and servants . . . seeing the necessity of masters and the great scarcity of servants, will not serve unless they may receive excessive wages, and some rather willing to beg in idleness than by labour to get their living."

This Ordinance was supplemented by the "Statute of Labourers" in 1351. The Statute detailed the rate of wages which were to be accepted by labourers and others: these rates corresponded closely to those paid before scarcity of labour forced up the price. Able-bodied men were not to be given alms. At the same time tradesmen were forbidden to sell provisions at exorbitant prices.

Thus we see, in those far-off times, the same desire to claim protection of the law to maintain equilibrium

in Industrial affairs that is evidenced in certain political manifestoes to-day. The difference is that then it was Employers who were State Socialists, Labour wanted freedom of contract.

The lords, having the entire machinery of government in their hands, passed these laws. But what happened? In the delightful language of the day: "The Labourers were so wilful and elated at their good fortune that they turned a deaf ear to the royal mandate, and refused to work except upon their own terms."

The law, where it was possible, was put into execution, but on the whole, as must always be the case in Britain when laws are felt to be unjust, the Statute of Labourers failed in its purpose. The wages of Labourers went up permanently fifty per cent., even after the immediate effects of the Plague had passed away.

The lesson to be learnt to-day from these old Labour enactments is obvious. No law can be enforced in this country if it is really against the will of the majority of the people, and no combination of authorities, however powerful, can stand up long against economic facts. As our Authority states: "The Statute of Labourers failed in fact because two masters were running after one man." [1]

But the most significant and interesting fact in regard to the breaking up of mediæval relationship between master and man is that it developed into a great social and moral uprising. Historians call it the Peasant Revolt, and it has been described by advocates of political socialism in our day as a revolution of the downtrodden members of the manual labourer class. But this is not true. The Villeins, who were wholly in it, were small farmers, often with servants of their own. Tradesmen and artisans (the technical experts of the

[1] Lipson, *Economic History*, p. 98.

day) in the towns, and even clergy, were active leaders in some districts, while in several places the county gentlemen themselves gave aid and personally led the agitation.

Undoubtedly the Statute of Labourers was the root of the trouble, but, as we shall see all through the centuries down to our own times, the injustice of using the law and its officers as weapons against industrial and social improvements in the condition of the people aroused, sooner or later, the conscience of men of all classes. A brilliant Labour writer has given vivid expression to the meaning of the Revolt [1] :—

> " It was economic in origin, but not only economic ; religious, but not exclusively religious. It sprang from an awakened consciousness which stirred up the whole being of men and enlisted the support of every activity of their nature. . . . The connexion between moral movements and social revolts must not only not be overlooked, but must be emphasized. Every social grievance which is the cause of revolutionary agitation has to be transformed into moral feeling. Only when the spiritual stuff of humanity is injured does humanity fight for improvement. Men do not object with any effect to economic poverty pure and simple ; they become furious about it because they think it unjust."

And when men become furious they revolt. Hence, in the fourteenth century, because the lords of the soil tried to put the clock back and decreed by statute that the labouring man, under penalties, must not claim the freedom to earn what the economic conditions of the time enabled him to do, the masses, and the middle classes and the men of broad outlook in the upper classes rose throughout the country. It was our first national Strike. It might even be called " Direct Action." " A leader of the revolt in Cambridgeshire rode up and down the country calling upon all men to refuse their

[1] J. Ramsay Macdonald, *The Social Unrest*, pp. 12–13.

service to their lords." That man was no peasant. The object of the Strike was "the abolition of personal servitude and the commutation of labour dues for a fixed rent of fourpence an acre." [1]

The Strike itself is thus described in a Chronicle of the time [2]:—

"Villeins and land-tenants in villeinage who owe services and customs to their lords . . . do daily withdraw their services . . . by colour of certain exemplifications made out of the Book of Domesday," in virtue of which "they affirm them to be quite and utterly discharged of all manner servage . . . and, which more is, gather themselves together in great routs and agree by such confederacy that every one shall aid other to resist their lords with strong hand."

A Strike indeed—the father of strikes, with every one of the elements we all know by heart to-day. It spread and spread, because it was for "the abolition of personal servitude." It lasted for two generations. It was not uniformly successful. The reactionaries of that time were very tough gentlemen, with very hard hands; and bitter indeed and very long was the pilgrimage of the people towards economic freedom. But they won important successes, and though the Revolt itself cannot be said to have been the fundamental cause of the abolition of villeinage and serfdom, since these changes began before 1381, and there were actually villeins and serfs in existence more than two centuries later, the uprising gave the feudal system its death-blow.

But it did more than this. As early as 1385 we find it recorded that:—

"The Bondmen of Leighton in Huntingdonshire, and again in 1386 the bondmen of Haugh Little in Suffolk, withdrew their customary services, organized a union, and bound themselves by oath to resist their masters."[3]

[1] Lipson, *Economic History*, p. 108. [2] Ibid.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 109.

These Unions did not, as far as has been ascertained, remain alive for any great length of time as organized bodies. Probably they never deserved the name in the modern sense. But they contained the germ of Labour organization as we know it. They came into existence, strove and fought—and *struck* as Unions. The chronicles state that the members "did long and rebelliously refuse their customs and services, and leagued together in opposition to their lord, besides doing other intolerable evils."

And if this is not Trade Unionism, as seen through the eye of those who suffer from it, we do not know what is.

Moreover, through succeeding generations the records give glimpses of "feuds" between the farmer and the labourer on the one hand, and the lord or landowner on the other, which prove the existence of means, however crude, by which the under-dogs combined industrially for their common needs and purposes. It was not until the eighteenth century that Trade Unions, as we know them, with written constitutions, and regulations, and accumulated funds, and registers of membership, were established. The spirit of combination, however, among men whose chief possession was their labour, to oppose injustice and to impose conditions upon the employing class, operated for the first time and with success during the Peasants' Revolt, and was never afterwards destroyed.

The Strike Weapon also began at this time to assume definite shape, and so it is that the ancestral home of Labour troubles and problems, and of the "unrest" which to most thoughtful people of this country is one of the gravest problems of our modern life, is to be found on the land among the farmers and agricultural population, not in cities and towns.

There is significance in this parentage. It shows

that where need arises for freedom and growth in human life, there will agitation take root. Environment of crowds and the temperament of the town are contributory causes only.

Injustice to Labour began on the land; on the land the Strike was born, and from the land it spread to the towns, and at last became a menace to all who view Labour as a mere coin of exchange, or a cog in the wheel of economic supply and demand.

Chapter III *Infancy and Boyhood*

THE Strike was born in the early part of the fourteenth century in the break-up of the feudal system, and the first men, as we have seen, to conceive this form of revolt were the workers on the land. The journeymen in the towns, however, soon followed their example, and made this weapon peculiarly their own.

The town life of those days, as we know, was a very quiet affair, and quite subordinate to agriculture. In 1388, forty years after the Black Death, law-courts were suspended in London during harvest-time, and in Norwich the principal industry, weaving, closed up for that period as late as the sixteenth century.

In 1513 Islington, Hoxton and Shoreditch were fields, the enclosure of which was so bitterly resented by the poorer inhabitants of the City that one morning they "assembled themselves and went with spades and shovels unto the same fields and there (like diligent workmen) so bestirred themselves that within a short space all the hedges about these towns were cast down and the ditches filled." [1]

The number of townsmen was small; their Industrial problems, therefore, cannot be properly compared to those of our day, or even to those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

[1] Lipson, *Economic History*, p. 165.

The Industrial centre of the towns lay in the Gilds. Each trade and, for a period, part of a trade, had its Gild, wherein the apprentices, journeymen, craftsmen and masters in the calling formed a close brotherhood or corporation to preserve their interests, their safety and their honour against all comers.

Mr. George Howell, in his *Conflict of Capital and Labour*, enters into Gild organization and life in great detail, and seeks to prove that the Craft Gilds of the Middle Ages, as distinguished from the Merchant Gilds, were essentially Trade Unions, and that our Unions of to-day are their lineal descendants. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, in their *History of Trade Unions*, deny this, and are supported by Mr. Lipson in his *Economic History of England*. It is a pretty controversy, into which we do not propose to enter. We agree with Mr. and Mrs. Webb, because Trade Unionism as we know it is a combination by Labour only, whereas the Gilds were a combination of Employers and of Labour.

Nevertheless, Gild· organization was built up to protect the craftsmen and journeymen members of each trade from the extortions and tyranny of King, lay nobility, and ecclesiastical corporations. It was, in its origin, an organization standing up for the inherent rights, privileges and freedom of Labour. That it also fought for the master-men and for justice to those who contributed capital to the advancement of the trade, does not vitiate its title to our gratitude and respect as being the institution recognizing that Labour had human rights.

The Gild was in fact, as Howell points out, the extension to Industry of the family principle upon which town life in the early feudal times was first established.

In their virtues and their weaknesses the Gilds were brotherhoods of men of various social position and of equally various financial status. Thus, while in the

country in the Middle Ages a social and industrial system existed scarcely distinguishable from slavery, in the towns there was, from the earliest times, a spirit of caring for common interests ; and even the humblest journeyman in a trade had a security far above that of the so-called free labourer on the land.

The inherent weakness, however, of the Craft Gild, as in large and clannish families and in class-conscious Trade Unions and Employers' Associations to-day, was exclusiveness towards those without the Gild, and oligarchical control of those within. These weaknesses proved, in the end, the ruin of the whole system.

Exclusiveness narrowed the brotherhood of the Gild into a caste seeking the advantage of a group at the expense of the community. It endeavoured to put trade into swaddling clothes.

As Lipson says (*Economic History*, p. 287) :—

> " The underlying principle of the Gild system was order rather than progress ; stability rather than expansion ; and the rule which limited the number of apprentices a master might employ was the counterpart of the rule which limited competition among the Gild brethren in other directions."

The oligarchy within the Gilds, though originally of a benevolent character, and exercised in the direction of preventing abuses, created a sense of irresponsibility among the rank-and-file members, and an inordinate belief in authority on the part of those at its head.

For a long time, however, the well-ordered life of Gild-membership was an oasis in the desert of conflicting factions outside. The discipline and rules under which the Gild members lived, though they cramped initiative and enterprise, protected them from destitution and from the predatory nobles. The Gilds were, indeed, great mutual protection and benefit societies, and jealous guardians of their members' rights and freedom.

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When the time came, however, for trade expansion to meet the needs of the growing population, Industry began to groan and strain against the bonds which held it down by rule and measure. The infant wanted to walk. It was no longer content to sit on its mother's knee or crawl about the hearthrug. It must at all costs find its own feet and use its limbs freely. The swaddling clothes were torn off and—trouble began.

There was the question of apprenticeship in the Gilds. The masters wanted as many as possible ; the journeymen as few. The objective of both sides was the same —protection of individual class-interest. No one conceived the idea that the wider the problem of trade expansion and changes became, the more necessary would it be to widen the brotherhood, and by relaxing the swaddling clothes in which it was wrapped, strengthen the interest and enthusiasm of the journeymen in the Gild by adding to their responsibilities and representation upon the governing powers.

No. The early parents of Industry in this country founded and laid down the evil tradition against which the babe has had to struggle all its life. This tradition said :—

" *While the trade is weak and is encompassed by enemies* let all members of it hold together and behave themselves discreetly ; insist on good measure and non-adulteration : prevent greed among masters, and uphold justice to the lowest apprentice and the poorest journeyman. Allow no man to acquire too much wealth, and no man to fall into indigence. All this shall ye be and do—*while ye are weak*. But when ye grow strong, and customers throng about the city, and trade, instead of being an affair of domestic bargaining, becomes a great adventure, then must the law be changed. Not each for all and all for each, but every man for himself, and the devil take the rest. Combine, yes ! but to make profit out of your neighbour, not to protect him. The law of business and of trade must be the law of self-interest only. The man, or men, who work in trade or commerce on any other principle whatever are fools—hopeless, crazy fellows."

This tradition was laid down in the fourteenth century, even while the Gild system still flourished. It caused, first of all, the creation of Yeoman and Journeymen Gilds which finally split the Craft Gilds, containing men of all ranks, in twain. These Journeymen Gilds were not formed to raise the status of labourers, but to maintain and protect their freedom and standard of life, which were endangered by encroachment of their masters. This point is one of great importance. These new Gilds were real, though embryo, Trade Unions. They were combinations of men without property or much hope of obtaining it, driven together because of a common danger from their Employers as a class. They came into existence during the latter part of the fourteenth century and endeavoured to maintain the position they had won through the scarcity of labour owing to the Black Death. The chronicles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are full of their "extortions." These chronicles, of course, are written by the other side always, because the journeyman-craftsman could not write, or, if he could, had no medium through which we are able to hear his point of view to-day.

But the position is fairly clear, and offers some remarkable points of resemblance to our own troubles owing to the late War.

There was a rise in the cost of living, and a debasement of currency; a determination on the part of Capitalists of all ranks to increase their profits, and on the part of labouring people to make good the position scarcity of labour had given them through the national catastrophe, and to improve their conditions of life.

We must be fair to the Capitalist, whether lord of the land or trader. It is to be remembered that the Black Death, which benefited the material position of Labour, had been a disaster to the masters. Conse-

quently, as they tightened their belts, they were in no humour to see their dependents enjoying comparative plenty at their expense. Add to this the spirit of adventure beyond seas which was beginning to be felt by all classes and which had its culmination in the reign of Elizabeth, and we have, in brief, a rough broad view of the Industrial situation after 1350 until the reign of the Stuarts.

It is very natural that writers who believe that only a social revolution by Labour can save the country, and who see only cruelty and greed in "the capitalist mechanism," should discover in the industrial struggles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries nothing but evil.

"The Peasants' Revolt," says Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, "was partly crushed out by an iron heel and partly smothered out by treachery." But it was not crushed out. True, the Peasants suffered. But so did their lords. The attempts by Labour Statutes to make it illegal for a man to earn a living wage not only failed, but it aroused moral resentment in all classes which remained alive through two centuries.

The methods by which Strikes were dealt with was brutal in the extreme, but the strikers themselves were equally brutal. Non-Union journeymen were beaten nearly to death; and a strike without bloodshed on the part of the strikers was unknown. These were the days of the pillory; the slicing-off of ears for petty theft; the thrashing of children openly, and the hanging of men in the street.

Industry, indeed, had a rough upbringing, and its manners were uncouth in proportion. Yet, in its growth, the interests of the strong were not alone considered. Women took their place, and an honourable place, in the development of trade. As far back as the thirteenth century they were admitted to membership of the Craft

Gilds of Barber-Surgeons, Dyers and other trades. They could be apprenticed—which meant full craftsmanship rights later on. Widows of craftsmen could carry on the business of their late husbands and employ labour. The brewing trade they kept largely in their own hands: America would not have gone dry in those days. Their principal industry was Silk-weaving; it was exclusively their own. In 1370 a foreign merchant was fined £200—an enormous sum in those days—upon a statement made by a "Silkwoman" that he engrossed all the silk, raw and spun, in order to raise the price. Those ladies knew how to win the sympathy of the public against a profiteer, even then. A century later an Act forbade the import of manufactured silk, in response to a petition wherein it was pleaded that "by silk-weaving and manufacture many a worshipful woman within the said city hath lived full honourably and therewith many good households kept, and many gentlewomen and others in great numbers like as there now be more than a thousand have been drawn under them in learning the same crafts and occupation."

The petition complained of the competition of Italian commodities, and said: "Every well-disposed person . . . will rather that women of their own nation born and own blood hath the occupation thereof, than strange people of other lands."

These last words are significant of much. "Other lands" were competing for English customers, and English Merchant Adventurers were exploiting foreign markets. Consequently, the old life in which trade was carried on by exchange and barter, without the need of credits or large capital, and, correspondingly, with a minimum of risk and a maximum of stability, was fast coming to an end.

Our Industrial infant, by the fifteenth century, had found his feet, and was outgrowing his clothes to an

alarming extent. He possessed, unfortunately, the characteristics of the roughly nurtured boy. His appetites consumed his thoughts and mind; he only performed duties under severe compulsion, and often not even then, and the spirit of self-interest we have described seized upon him body and soul.

Brave and fearless he was. The strong oppressed the weak, but on sea and land adventured all they had, and with the growth of hard, business-minded merchants and master-craftsmen there grew up a yeoman and labouring class sturdier than that of other countries, and from which a constant stream of men emerged who succeeded in becoming masters in their turn.

Nevertheless, the seed of bitterest class antagonism, with its outcrop of strikes and revolts, was sown wide and deep. The "brave days of old'," in the time of the Tudors and of Elizabeth, were a time when great fortunes were made by cloth-weavers and woollen manufacturers, to the ruin of agricultural labour. Sheep farms in many counties swept the growing of wheat almost out of existence, and although a great proportion of the population hitherto employed in farm labour was absorbed in weaving, wool combing and the like, the change divorced labourers more and more from any association with their employers.

Nor was this the only disadvantage, from the humane point of view, of the new conditions imposed by foreign trade and increased enterprise on all hands. The smaller master-craftsman was not, as a class, a man able to grasp the requirements of big business. He could manufacture articles and train apprentices, but merchanting in a large way, and the reaching of distant markets, were beyond his comprehension altogether. The merchant or middleman came between the maker of goods and the consumer, and soon throve apace. Capitalism came into its own.

All this was inevitable, and a mere question of Industry's physical and mental growth towards manhood. Those who would put the clock back to-day should study historically the sequence of events, and the necessities which arose one by one for the initiative of business men, whether manufacturer or craftsman, trader or Merchant-Adventurer. The Gilds system, with all its virtues, was but a nursery ground. Its discipline, and its constant checks to any enterprise, unfitted it for the world. English Industry would have been a puny weakling and England herself crushed by the Spaniards and the Inquisition later on, but for her Capitalists, who broke free from rule and craft and went forth to speculate in the unknown.

The worst fault of the time—always to be found in countries striving towards new goals—was the indifference of the strong for the weak; the contempt of the educated few for the toiling masses struggling along in the rear.

Then came a change. As in the fourteenth century—forty years after the Black Death—men of all classes revolted against the misery and injustice caused by the oppressive action of Employers and Government; so, a hundred years later, men arose who were determined that the workers should not be shamelessly exploited by capitalist Employers who forced them to work endlessly for a pittance in busy times, and discharged them wholesale when trade was slack.

The Crown took the lead. In 1586 the Privy Council wrote to the Sheriff and Justices of the Peace in Somerset:—

"That whereas the poorer sort of the people inhabiting about the city of Bath and other towns on the Easterly parts of the county of Somerset, wont to live by spinning, carding and working of wool, are not set on work, whereby in this time of dearth of corn and victual they lack their common and necessary food, a matter not only full of pity but of dangerous consequences

to the State if speedy order be not taken therein ; Her Majesty, therefore, tendering the one, and careful of the other, hath given commandment that they forthwith . . . consider of the present inconvenience and how it may be redressed."[1]

Then followed practical instructions. Again, in the reign of James I, the rich clothiers were informed :—

"It was unfitting they should at their pleasure dismiss their workpeople, for those who had gained in the profitable times must now be content to lose for the public good, till the decay of trade be remedied."

Yet these merchant-princes were men who could make their people happy. The writers of the sixteenth century, unlike their predecessors, were not backward in describing scathingly the bitter lot of the poor under Capitalism. It may be permitted, therefore, to quote a bard who saw the other side, and wrote of one of the first factories, probably, set up in the West Country :—

"Within one room being large and long
There stood two hundred Looms full strong :
Two hundred men, the truth is so,
Wrought in these Looms all in a row,
By every one a pretty boy
Sate making quills with mickle joy.
In another place hard by,
An hundred women merrily
Were carding hard with joyful cheer
Who singing, sate, with voices clear,
And in a chamber close beside
Two hundred maidens did abide,
In petticoats of Stammell red,
And milk-white kerchers on their head."[2]

[1] Lipson, *Economic History*, p. 418.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 420.

Chapter IV — *Adolescence*

THE condition of industrial workers fell to a very low ebb during the fifteenth century and the first years of Elizabeth's reign. This was the transition stage between the old Gild system, when a large proportion of the journeymen looked forward to independent craft-mastership, and the new capitalist system, where the accumulation of money, education and social influence were the passports to the highest grades of Gild-membership and privileges, and finally turned these bodies, where they remained in existence, into "Companies" with "Courts" and "Liveries" and autocratic control.

This stage of transition passed. The separation between master and man became complete. Society began to split up into clearly defined groups. Democratic usages gradually died out. England under Elizabeth was a country governed by a class.

The completion of these changes made for tranquillity at first. The Capitalist Adventurers, the Merchants and the money-making Traders brought wealth into the country. They had created below them, it is true, a property-less class, cut off by the new economic system from any direct participation in the acquirement of wealth or in responsibility of any kind for Industrial management. But having done this, the "classes" bethought themselves of the toilers and under-dogs in kindly fashion. They made laws for their benefit—our first Poor-law dates from the time of Elizabeth. The

Crown, as we have seen, admonished Employers of labour to provide for their men during unemployment; Local Authorities took action in the same direction. In 1467 at Worcester, at Coventry in 1518 and 1547, they were forbidding truck-wages and taking other measures against the defrauding traders and employers. The trend of public opinion, outside the trading classes, and even within it among the better employers, set steadily rising in favour of humane treatment of the poor and their relief in times of distress.

A new epoch had dawned with a new ideal. The proletariat were not now looked upon as emancipated serfs or as mere "hands"—adjuncts of the machinery which was coming into use in the new factories and homes of the workers. They were felt to be men and women and members of the community, though subordinate members, with a right to receive protection from it. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, after a bitter diatribe against the plundering spirit characteristic of the Reformation, to which he attributes, with justice, much of the oppression suffered by the poor, says:—

> "Then ensued [after the Reformation] a period of careful treatment of the poor by charity regulation and legislation, the last aiming at the suppression of poverty by, *inter alia*, land laws, laws affecting wages, and laws setting up workhouses . . . the social unrest of that time was the strife of those who, possessing economic power, were trying to become socially and politically enfranchised. . . . The poor ceased to be revolutionary; the well-to-do took up that rôle."[1]

Industry was passing from boyhood into adolescence in a new atmosphere. It was not the right atmosphere from a democratic point of view, but it was not inhuman. We cannot find any authentic records of serious strikes about this time further than sporadic revolts against

[1] *The Social Unrest*, J. Ramsay Macdonald, p. 15.

early factory establishments and machinery, and there was not much vitality or sustained purpose in any of these disturbances. Nothing approaching organization of any aggressive character among journeymen in trade, or labourers on the land, is to be found in those days.

The facts appear to have been that the worst features of early Capitalism having been modified by the middle of the sixteenth century, and material circumstances having improved, Labour during this period lay quiet as a separate class force.

It is very important, however, that we should understand this period in its relation to the growth of the Strike movement, which was to blaze into intense activity later on.

Though no outbreak of Labour unrest is reported, and the tendency of the more intelligent journeymen to become small masters still continued and prevented the growth of any wide or systematic Trade Union organization, the seed was being sown for the development of a class-consciousness among Industrial workers which, after the Civil War, bore bitter fruit.

The Craft Gilds, with all their faults, preserved a close brotherhood among all classes of men in a trade. The wardens and governors might be, and generally were, masters, but they were elected by the members as a whole, and it was their particular business to see that justice was done to the poorest of the craft. Even the Yeomen and Journeymen Gilds, though composed exclusively of journeymen, still retained a close connexion with the Craft Gilds, and while they held together taught journeymen the power of organization and upheld the dignity of Labour in the eyes of municipal and other authorities.

When, however, Capital and not Craftsmanship began to rule Industry, the strength of Journeymen Gilds

grew less and less. The Trade-Unionism which had arisen among their members either died out or became dormant or torpid.

Individually, the Yeomen of England of Elizabeth's day were men of a sturdy breed, but collectively they gradually ceased to count. The result was that all social and industrial initiative and power passed into the hands of the middle and upper classes. It was not wholly misused, by any means, in spite of glaring instances to the contrary. But it possessed one fatal weakness; it robbed the industrial working class and the peasantry of any sense of responsibility and consciousness of citizenship. They followed whither they were led, taking no part as a class in the shaping of history. They fought at times, indeed at all times, against material injustice, when oppression touched their bread and butter, but they were otherwise the "governed," the "lower classes," and as years passed, and the beginning of the end came of the despotic rule of kings, they took no part, corporately, in the great struggle for freedom of the Revolution.

Writers of Industrial history, as far as we have observed, pass over the Revolutionary period as though it were a blank page, or a time when industry had hibernated like a bear.

With great deference we would question whether any period was more pregnant with active life and development for Industry, psychologically speaking, than the thirty years following the unfolding of the Royal Standard in 1642.

No analogy can be drawn historically, of course, between the Revolution and our war with Germany. The first was Civil strife, often fratricidal, and rent classes and families asunder. The last united classes in this country and opened the eyes of thousands of British men between whom environment, economic

and social, had created a wide gulf, to a new conception of each other and a new brotherhood.

But there is one feature common to both periods—a feature characteristic of any great national upheaval in which all classes are involved. The barriers of caste were rudely shaken in both wars, and among the yeomen and journeymen classes, both then and now, a new spirit of revolt against authority and a consciousness of power was born.

In the beginning of the Civil War there was little sign of this. It was not, strictly speaking, a class war at all. The leaders on both sides were equal in rank. Even Cromwell was a country gentleman, the cadet of a very ancient family.

It was the revolt of one part of the nation, irrespective of class, against an autocratic, irresponsible monarch, who was himself the representative of an equally irresponsible and still more autocratic oligarchy.

It is this, perhaps, which has misled our industrial writers, and caused them to declare that it was a war of the middle classes against the aristocracy.

The truth of the matter is that while the actual leadership in the Civil War on the side of the Parliament was in the hands of men of the upper and middle classes, and even remained there during the Protectorate, their victory over Charles was won because the man to whom they owed it, and but for whom they must have been wholly defeated, understood, as Abraham Lincoln did in later times, the "common people," and had the power of arousing in the farm labourer and the factory hand, as keenly as in men of other ranks, the earnest desire for political freedom and determination to obtain it at all costs, which finally overcame the brilliancy of Rupert and the high courage of the Cavaliers.

Cromwell as Protector was far more autocratic than any Stuart as King. The iron discipline imposed upon

his soldiers in the war and his fondness for military methods after the "Crowning Mercy" of Worcester, are held by many writers whose sympathies were not with the Royalists to prove that all he said and did in favour of Democracy was little better than the hypocrisy of a clever brain aiming at supreme personal power.

A close study of his life, however, shows this to be a complete fallacy. Oliver P., for all his masterful ways, was one of the greatest democrats in history. This is not the place to develop the argument, but as Cromwell affected in a very striking way, in our opinion, the development of thought among workers, if, indeed, he is not in truth the actual founder of modern democracy itself, we must touch upon some incidents of his life at this period.

Why did Cromwell's Ironsides beat Rupert's Guards at Marston Moor? How was Dunbar won? It is not enough to say that Cromwell had military genius. Undoubtedly he had; but when the quality of that genius, and especially the details of his campaigns are examined, it will be found that the cause of his success which stands out pre-eminently is the confidence in him, and the extraordinary personal loyalty and affection for him, of his men. Again, when that confidence is examined, it will be seen that the root of it lay in his complete indifference to the rank or "quality" of those he entrusted with command and authority. This indifference, more than anything else, earned him the hearty dislike and even hatred of his peers and the Parliament, and of his superiors in the Parliamentary Army. Lincoln was disliked for the same reason.

Many people, moreover, who do not understand the minds of working men, are under the delusion that the leader whom they crave for must be afraid of them.

Nothing is further from the truth. They always suspect demagogues, though they may use them. The

man they trust must be above all demagogic arts and be made of the sternest stuff. He may, on occasion, take his own course against their expressed wish. But what they require is that he shall understand their point of view, respect them, and listen patiently to all they have to say.

Cromwell did all this, and—a great virtue in democracy—he had no sensitiveness about his personal dignity. His famous retort, when upbraided for indifference to scandalous libels, stamps him as the type of man dear to democracy all the world over.

"Shall we," he exclaimed, "quarrel with every dog in the street that barks at us, and suffer the kingdom to be lost with such a fantastical thing?"

Then Cromwell cared very little for the religious opinions of a man—another democratic quality. He was ready even to let Charles have his bishops, if he would obey the Constitution. When Protector he befriended the Unitarian minister, Biddle, refusing to allow the grim Presbyterian divines to touch him, though they had decreed that the man should be whipped from Newgate to Tyburn for preaching his creed. Indeed, finding Biddle to be of particularly sober and godly life, Cromwell afterwards gave him a pension of £50 a year.

These incidents in the life of a man who governed England with a stronger hand than any king we have ever crowned, are of great importance to us in considering the Industrial psychology of the time, and of the days which followed.

They went home to the heart and the life of the common people, and were cherished and remembered by them when those of other classes had forgotten.

Cromwell's principles of democracy, coupled with his overmastering personality and genius, lost Charles his kingdom and afterwards his life.

Cromwell fought for political justice. Charles, with

many good qualities, was essentially unjust—first to his friends, then to his people, and finally to himself.

Cromwell did not always live up to his ideal, but he strove for it always. It was the aim of his life, and the people, while they did not understand him, felt this and followed him. He was never a Republican. He had no Utopian dreams of a socialistic commonwealth. The political faith of the leaders of Labour to-day would have seemed to him, in very truth, "a most fantastical thing." But the rights of man, as against the privileges of class, were sacred in his eyes, and when, on certain occasions, he drove head-first against any expression of popular will or sentiment, he did so with his naked manhood, as it were, uncloaked by any force beyond that of his personality and belief in the justice of his cause.

A classic instance of this, and one worth recalling here, as Cromwell's way of dealing with a military strike, occurred in 1647, at the end of the first Civil War.

Charles was with the army, and Cromwell and Fairfax, hoping against hope to persuade him to accept the terms of a constitutional monarchy, braved stiffly the furious rancour and religious fanaticism of their officers who called for the King's blood. Behind these officers, of whom Lilburn "the Leveller" was the most violent, stood the rank and file of the army to a man. Day by day, as Charles, secretly intriguing with Parliament and with the Scots, dallied and made promises and offered bribes, the fury of the soldiers grew. Cromwell's own life was attempted. He was known to have been touched by the affectionate relations of Charles and his family, and impressed with the personal dignity of the King in his captivity. The men believed him to be at heart a traitor, and thought they hated him.

We must try to picture these men in camp, ill-clothed and fed—for Parliament feared them, and hoped to

humble their proud spirit by short commons. They were hard-bitten soldiers, but they fought for an ideal and now it seemed likely that they were to be betrayed. Agitators were among them sowing seeds of distrust. They were in the most dangerous of moods, and they had the country in their power.

The day came when Fairfax and Cromwell received intelligence that at any moment there might be a rising of the whole army against them.

The action taken by them was in itself significant of the spirit of the time.

They paraded the troops, and Fairfax, as Commander-in-Chief, personally addressed them all, stating the truth and appealing to their loyalty.

The appeal went home, and some regiments responded and swore obedience upon the assurance (an interesting indication of the position taken up by the men) that the present Parliament be dissolved and another elected by the votes of the whole nation.

Two regiments, however, refused any obedience whatever, and flaunted in the faces of the Commanders papers on which were written: "England's Freedom: Soldiers' Rights." These papers were stuck in their hats. Fairfax made another appeal, and one regiment yielded. But the other, which had driven away its officers, yelled defiance. It was completely beyond control.

The crisis was desperate. Though the bulk of the Army was now quiet there was no force available to quell these hundreds of grim, furious men. Again Fairfax attempted to speak. He was howled down. And now Cromwell took action. He put his General aside. He made no speech. Without a word he set spurs to his horse and rode, alone, straight for the shouting men. When he was in their midst he ordered them to take the papers from their hats, and upon their

refusal he—Lieutenant-General, officer of the highest rank but one in the Army—drew his sword and, one against six hundred, charged.

No parallel in history exists for such an act. It was just an impulse directed by the passionate anger and outraged sense of a plain, fighting, democratic man.

But it appealed, how it appealed, to those he charged upon! What no words could do, and no authority accomplish, the sight of old Noll's face wearing the look they had seen when he led them to victory at Marston Moor and Naseby fight, went home to those he met at the sword's point. They were rebels and fanatics: they looked upon him as a traitor, but—he was *their* man, the man above all men whom in their hearts they trusted and loved. Resistance to him, and open violence, was impossible. One by one, as he raised his sword to strike, they pulled the papers from their hats—one by one, then company by company—and asked for pardon.

It was given—as only Cromwell ever did pardon in those days, and in the end only one man out of the whole suffered the penalty.

The moral of this incident, and countless others in which Cromwell was concerned, is that the people of England, down to the actual rank and file, were taught through taking part in civil war, to think and act strongly for themselves. So directly did they do so that, but for the strength and, again, the democratic instinct of this one man, the whole country would have been plunged into anarchy and strife too terrible and suicidal to be contemplated.

That war, of all wars, aroused the passions and full sense of individuality in men. Freedom was won by it. Democracy was won. And if, in the end, one strong hand held the passion of the populace in check, as it struck down the monarchy, and so preserved peace in

the land, and grasped the sceptre of personal power, yet the seed of free thought, political and industrial, was sown and the ground prepared for a self-assertion among men of all degrees, and, above all, a sense of responsibility, which was to bring a harvest little imagined by the joyous roysterers who welcomed in the Restoration.

So passed the adolescence of Industry—the seeding time, underground and unseen, as the budding time in a sturdy schoolboy, when his legs grow long and his trousers short, and he begins to dream of life to come as one long and exhilarating adventure.

Outwardly, Industry appeared to stand much where it was. Labour was scarce in those years, but there were no strikes. We fear Oliver P., for all his democracy, would have had a very short way of dealing with a Civil strike. And foreign trade flourished, for the English fleet guarded the seas. So, in spite of many dislocations, Industrial peace was preserved. It was only beneath the surface that a change had come. The masters, however, who believed that the workers would be content in future to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, counted without their host, and were shortly to find that they had built their house upon the sand.

Chapter V — *The Lout*

THERE is a time in the growth of large-boned men when they are clumsy in gait, smash everything that is breakable, and in bearing and manners are a trial, and often an unqualified nuisance, to the rest of Society.

Such was Industry in the latter part of the seventeenth and the greater part of the eighteenth century.

The close of the second Civil War saw an expansion of trade. The majority of the leaders of the Parliament were trading men; and the efficiency of Cromwell's naval and military forces, and the thoroughness with which they dealt with pirates and other powers on land and sea which interfered with British merchants, gave their ventures protection they had never before enjoyed. Cromwell, who was by temperament a Free-trader, gave every encouragement to foreigners to find a home in England.

Therefore, in spite of the impoverishment of the country through the War, and the charges and taxes which had to be imposed to support the military forces which Cromwell did not disband, British Industry grew apace, spread its limbs wide and strode forward into the world.

The Restoration brought changes of all kinds, but, on the whole, Industry did not suffer. We find evidence that the journeymen, at least, were working under better conditions. Mr. and Mrs. Webb, in their *History of*

Trade Unionism,[1] quote a pamphlet written in 1669, which says :—

"The general conspiracy among artificers and labourers is so apparent that within these twenty-five years the wages of joiners, bricklayers, carpenters, etc., are increased, I mean within forty miles of London (against all reason and good government), from eighteen and twenty pence a day to 2*s*. 6*d*. and 3*s*., and mere labourers from ten to twelve pence a day unto sixteen and twenty pence, and this not since the dreadful Fire of London only, but some time before. A journeyman Shoemaker has . . . fourteen pence for making that pair of shoes which within these twelve years he made for ten pence."

Significant is the comment of the writer of the pamphlet upon these higher prices :—

"Nor has the increase of wages amongst us been occasioned by quickness of trade and want of hands (as some do suppose), which are indeed justifiable reasons, but through an exacting humour and evil disposition in our people (like our Gravesend watermen, who by some temporary and mean pretences of the late Dutch war have raised their ferry double to what it was, and finding the sweet thereof keep it up still) that so they may live the better above their station, and work so much the fewer days by how much the more they exact in their wages."

Another pamphleteer, in language which is used freely to-day, says :—

"We cannot make an English cloth so cheap as they do in other countries because of the strange idleness and stubbornness of our poor."

This was in 1681, thirty years after the Civil War.

There are indications that, as in our own day, War, causing scarcity of labour, had produced "an exacting humour and evil disposition" in Industry, and that the nature of workmen hardened by War was not one to brook the assumption of superiority and mastership of Employers, which had been so prominent a feature of the period preceding the War.

[1] Page 21.

The war-spirit, rude, forceful, indifferent to right where might would serve, permeated the nation, and every one was tired of the semi-military government of the Protectorate. The actual amount of class and political bitterness between the Roundheads and the Cavaliers was not, it is true, nearly so great as post-Civil-War Royalist writers would lead us to believe. Nor was there any general persecution of Puritans by Charles. Nevertheless, every lawless impulse in the people was on the rebound during his reign and those of his successors.

It is therefore not wonderful that in Industry which had no stable organization on either side, and nothing behind it but an evil tradition of strife and repression, and was at the rawest age and stage of development, an atmosphere should develop electric and ominous in every way for the future.

The psychological conditions were rendered much graver by the political events of the time, which had a direct bearing upon Industry.

During the whole of Charles's reign there were enormous difficulties in trading with foreign countries, already a source of much of England's wealth. Wars and rumours of wars everywhere, without the strong hand of Cromwell to hold in check the lawless raids of privateers on the high seas, made the ventures of the merchants and all exporters of goods for foreign markets more risky and speculative than ever. Money was scarce; labour, as we have seen, was claiming a higher standard of life. A very anxious time for capitalists, during which self-interest, uppermost always in men taking risks, hardened into a struggle for self-preservation.

The reign of James II made things worse.

Picture the anxieties of the business man of those times. If he were Catholic he might find favour in high places. But he would find an undercurrent of bitter,

stubborn opposition from his Protestant competitors, and if among his workpeople there numbered men who had fought for religious freedom in the Revolution, or the sons or other relatives of such men, he might be in greater danger still.

If, on the other hand, he were a Protestant, his future was dark, and, supposing him to be a man of wealth, his position was very unsafe. Priests were everywhere in those days ; very quiet as a rule, showing no arrogance, but extraordinarily inquisitive. The King was in their hands ; the country, for a time, was in his power. The Monmouth Rebellion, we know, was crushed with a brutality that made men shudder. The fate of the men in the wool trade in the Western counties during the Bloody Assize must have sent a cold and penetrating chill up the spine of thousands of Protestant traders, who knew now what to expect from James—if the negotiations with William, just begun, were to fail. In short, from an Industrial point of view, England was far from being a pleasant place to live in for an employer in those days.

The government of Industry, which they held largely in their hands up to the War, was now being seriously questioned by the Municipal Authorities. The growth of the towns and cities, which had been continuous for two centuries, while it gave power at first into the hands of the trading companies, which were crushing out the old Gilds with their protection of the rights of Labour, built up the power of Municipal organizations. The Mayor and Aldermen of the towns were always jealous of the Gilds, and when these bodies split into associations of masters on the one hand and leagues of journeymen on the other, they leant their influence to a large extent on the side of the workmen. This was not always the case, and it must be admitted that there is little evidence to show that where it happened the motive of the

Municipal Authority was merely to do justice to workmen.

In great part their action was dictated by a determination to prevent these Companies from controlling prices and supply of goods to the detriment of the consumer. But, broadly speaking, from the time that Capitalists, as represented by the manufacturers and traders, in the fifteenth century virtually had things all their own way in dealing with their own workpeople in the open market, the Local Authorities, political as well as social, became more and more guardians and trustees of Labour interests.

Thus, during the seventeenth century and the first part of the eighteenth century, workmen's combinations in every trade were formed to petition the Courts against Employers. The old Acts, passed even in the time of Edward III and more frequently in later days when the Crown, as we have seen in the reigns of Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth, sought, without great success, to rein in the rapacity of those Employers who disregarded humanity in their race for riches, were hunted up, and more than one signal victory was won by the workers. In 1667–8, the Hatters (or Felt-makers), whose Trade Union, the Journeymen Hatters Union to-day, is said to claim its birth from that date, presented a petition against the Felt Makers Company and the Employers in the trade to the Court of Aldermen of the City of London. The Court of Aldermen decided that the wages to be paid were to be determined by them from a piece-work list to be annually presented by the Trade "in order that the journeymen may not by combination or otherwise excessively at their pleasure raise their wages," and also that the Employers should not unreasonably lower wages. This decision caused, for the time, co-operation between the journeymen and the masters to present an agreed list. But the harmony did not last. In 1696 a deputation of the men appeared

before the Court to say that they had determined not to accept less wages (in any case) than had formerly been received, and asking for a revision of the order in that sense: it was the first recorded claim to a Court by workmen in combination for a fixed minimum wage.

Unfortunately, the men had already taken the law into their own hands by seizing upon a journeyman who had accepted lower rates. "They stirred up the apprentices," the masters said, "to seize upon him as he was working, tie him to a wheelbarrow, and in a tumultuous and riotous manner to drive him through all the considerable places in London and Southwark."

This was naughty; but naughtier still, and a presage of days to come, was the organization of "Clubs" of journeymen raising money to provide Strike funds for men out of work through resistance to the Employers' demands. Retaliation by the Masters followed, and workmen were prosecuted for refusing to work at "lawful" rates.

But the Hatters were pertinacious and stuck to their guns, and in 1699, after a three years' struggle, the Court gave them an increase of wages and stopped all legal proceedings against them.

The Tailors also took action about this time. This was a trade which developed swiftly in the Restoration days of fine clothes; and, the old Gild customs having been broken and no limitation being placed on the number of apprentices or men who might be taught a trade, a race of journeymen, without power of becoming masters on their own account, grew up.

In 1720 the Master-tailors complained to Parliament that "the Journeymen Tailors . . . to the number of seven thousand and upwards, have lately entered into a combination to raise their wages and leave off working an hour sooner than they used to do. . . ."

Parliament, in reply, fixed a *maximum* rate of wage

and forbade "combinations" on either side. The men, however, held together, and made "houses of call" at various public-houses (with knowledge of the masters, who, in a truly British manner, connived at the breach of a foolish law, and went to these centres when they wanted hands). Later on, in 1750–1, they induced the Middlesex Justices to require the Masters to pay certain wage-rates—and so won, for the time.

It is therefore certain that during the century following the Civil War the workmen were steadily combining and organizing to raise, or at least to maintain, their "standard of life," and that Trade Unionism was actually in being. It followed that the Strike weapon was no longer a passionate and lawless outburst against oppression, but was becoming a more or less calculated and systematized process to bring Masters to see that they would lose more than they gained by disregard of workers' rights and interests.

The feature of all this period, however, is the rudeness of the Weapon on the one hand, and the very limited use that could be made of it, or of such strength as the men possessed, to force the recognition of their claim. They never seriously attempted to enter into battle single-handed with Employers for very long. After skirmishes they seem to have gone to the Courts or to Parliament. Then their hard-earned savings mostly went in lawyers' fees. The Masters did likewise—and they had the longer purse.

In the meantime there was no slacking in consolidation and increasing corporate strength among the Masters. Nor, alas, in the hardness of their commercial outlook on Industry. The conviction of the Employer more than ever was that he was master of all he surveyed. Machinery was coming in, displacing and disintegrating hand-labour. The Factory system, though in embryo, was getting its hold slowly but steadily, and in the worst form.

The conception that Science might play a great part in all processes pertaining to manufacture was beginning, though dimly, to form itself in the minds of up-to-date men of business. All old-fashioned methods of production were being examined critically with new eyes, though they were not yet to be scrapped.

And with all this advance of intelligence among men of the upper and middle classes in regard to economics of production, distribution and the like, not a spark of comprehension apparently entered their minds of the other side of the problem—the human and educative side.

They improved processes of manufacture and discovered machinery; they devised better means of Exchange and of Banking; Roads and Transport; Ships and Shipping facilities. Piracy, which had destroyed so much merchandise and crippled trade, was now effectively dealt with. Merchants and Manufacturers associated and intermarried with the aristocratic classes more and more on equal terms. The privileges of Society were confined no more to the families of landed nobles and esquires. England and Scotland, when united as Great Britain, became a country with a wider and more enduring basis of civil order and prosperity than any in Europe. Education, also, was far more widely diffused, and literature and art flourished as never before. But no attempt was made to raise the social ideals or awaken the pride of citizenship among the "lower orders."

We were a great nation, and we had great men in our ranks. But in the centre of our national life—Industry—both in agricultural districts and in the fast developing cities and towns, there was growing a deep internal unrest and discontent; the stirring up of reaction, to grow, as years passed, more pronounced, more bitter, and more violent, against the rule of Masters and the servitude of Men.

There were faults on both sides. It is unfair to describe the men who owned capital as mere tyrants, and those who suffered from its abuse as martyrs and suffering saints in fustian or corduroy.

The Civil War had aroused the passions of all ranks, and Journeymen, when labour was scarce, like their employers when it was plentiful, had no scruples as to their methods; nor, when machinery was introduced and they were strong enough, did they hesitate to destroy property right and left.

Industry, indeed, was a lout, wasteful and stupid; clumsy and uncontrolled. But behind all acts of Labour violence and all recriminatory efforts to hit their opponents over the head, regardless of motive or commonsense, there lay a responsibility which was the Masters', and to which, as a class, they were wholly blind. They never saw the Workers in any other light than that of a class of human beings created by Providence for the service of their betters. Political leaders, with the exception of Cromwell, even during the upheaval of the Civil War, were no better. They were stout Republicans whose theories gave everyone a great deal of trouble, and more than one nearly betrayed the Parliamentary cause altogether; but there was no hint of real Democracy in the Republic of their dreams. Always, below those who were to hold the power of governing the nation on an equal basis, was the mere manual worker patiently following his dull appointed task. The education of such people to undertake any of the duties of citizenship was held to be out of the question. They were free to live, and they must be treated considerately according to law. They were actually members of the human family, but in the mechanism of any calling they held a clearly defined place—the lowest, and their labour was as much a commodity as the turn-over of a machine.

Chapter VI — *The Criminal Type*

WE once asked a man who had spent years of his life in a poor neighbourhood and knew all there was to be known about the lot of working lads where he lived, what profession or calling the brightest and most energetic boys of the slum aspired to, and, if they possessed sufficient mental capacity, reached. He replied without hesitation: "Burglary."

"You see," he explained in the quiet even tones of one stating a scientific fact, "given the environment of a home where the only education of a boy outside school—where he learns nothing but lessons—is in the street, where slum gossip and language is his only education in manners and speech; where the only people he knows who do anything but very monotonous work are the light-fingered, and the one person to be avoided is the policeman, it naturally follows that a fellow with spirit and courage and initiative faculty takes to thieving as a duck takes to water. In this profession burglary is the highest rung of the ladder. So that is the goal of the ambitious chap. He generally ends in Dartmoor."

This lesson may be applied to Industry in the latter half of the eighteenth century and the first years of the nineteenth.

The environment of Industrial and Social life in Europe and in England in the days of the early Georges may be likened to that slum.

These were the days which were leading France to bloody revolution, then to Napoleon, and then to the devastation of Europe, when England was to fight for long years with her back against the wall.

Class war was seen in its most extreme form. Contempt and dread by the rich of the poor, hatred and fear by the poor of the rich, was the atmosphere in which Industry was to live from 1750 for a hundred years.

In 1766 the *Annual Register* records that " there having been many riots and much mischief done in different parts of England in consequence of the rising of the poor, who have been driven to desperation and madness by the exorbitant prices of all manner of provisions, we shall . . . give a short abstract of these disturbances." This " Abstract " told of strife and tumults in Bath, Berwick-on-Tweed, Malmesbury, Hampton, Leicester, Oxford, Exeter, Stroud, Salisbury, Wolverhampton, Coventry, Birmingham, Nottingham and elsewhere.

Such occurrences were immediately caused by economic pressure, doubtless felt severely by other classes as well as the workmen. But behind the result of scarcity was the evil spirit of class isolation and division among the people.

The worst tumults in those years occurred over the sufferings of Labour through the introduction of machinery, and the rise and establishment of the Factory system. There were two sides to these disturbances.

Who can blame men who, at great expense and after years of thought and effort, had discovered means for producing goods more quickly and far cheaper by machines, if they used such means to advance the interests of their trade, the consumers of the goods and their own pockets? Who, again, can blame them if, when mobs collected in fury and disorder and often without warning, and burnt and smashed property, and brought many a thrifty manufacturer, who had originally been

only a poor master-craftsman, to utter ruin, they invoked against the leaders of the mob and destroyers of a life's work and savings, all the rigour of the law?

There was no crime in the introduction of machinery, nor was it the result of a corrupt system. Great as were the virtues of the old Gilds, had their restrictive customs been persisted in when the population of this and other countries multiplied, and the need of the world for better and cheaper food and clothes and comforts and refinements of life became acute, worse results must have happened even than those which have followed the development of wholesale merchanting of goods; the specialization of processes; the introduction of the middle-man; and, finally, the break-up of the small workshops and the creation of factories on a large scale.

The infant—Industry—had to become a boy, and the boy to reach manhood. Growth of invention cannot be stopped. The trouble was not that Industry grew, but that it was nurtured in an atmosphere of self-interest and class-division from the time it left the nursery. On every side and at every period it saw one mass of men curbing the freedom and circumscribing the opportunities of those below them. At their best these men could see no further than that by industrial legislation and by their Poor Laws and other contrivances they should prevent starvation of the mass of the common people.

Employers, in those days, viewed labourers as ignorant, savage and uncouth creatures, whose pleasures were low; whose conduct to one another, to their masters and to their dependents was brutish, rough and hard. They were reputed to want little but food and beer. They worked, it was said, when they must and slacked when they could. They understood force, everyone declared, and little else. They laughed at religion. No one could safely go into their haunts without arms or protection.

It was all a bitter tragedy, the result of mutual ignorance and complete indifference to any moral law in Industrial organization. And as Industrial organization and the conditions under which it was carried on were chiefly in the hands of the Employers of labour, upon their shoulders we have to lay the chief responsibility.

They were right in refusing to allow the development of Industry to be held by the bonds of legal enactments passed in the days of the Tudors. They were utterly wrong in failing to provide, in place of these old laws, proper protection and humane safeguards and, above all, education, for the workers now at their mercy.

It was this neglect and indifference on the part of Employers to the sufferings and degradation which fell upon the people when their poor skill was supplanted by machines, and the cruelty of unrestricted employment in factories of women and children of the tenderest years, which broke the last links of comradeship and the old Gild family feeling between master and man.

The conduct of certain groups of Employers cannot be justified by the vital changes in methods of production rendered necessary by machine work on a large scale.

The Frame-work-knitters, the makers of hosiery of the day, was a case in point. This trade was established in Elizabeth's reign, and a Company of Masters to regulate it was incorporated by Charles II in 1663. The Charter of Incorporation directed the Company to carry out the Act of Elizabeth, which limited the number of apprentices each employer could take, and thereby preserved the old rule of all trades in the time of the Gilds, which prevented an overplus of workers, and kept all engaged in their occupation in more or less regular employment.

Early in the eighteenth century the Masters broke the rule. The demand for goods was increasing enormously and they wanted cheap labour. They were assisted by

the old Poor Law which placed pauper children in their hands—unprotected.

The adult workers were reduced to misery and petitioned the Company in 1710 to carry out the old regulations. The Company, busy making money out of boy labour, refused. A violent strike followed, and, as with all strikes at that time, a hundred of the "frames" used in the trade, and very valuable property of the masters, were destroyed. The men also thrashed the masters and apprentices. The result appears to have been temporary submission of the masters and a promise to reduce apprenticeships. Force was a cogent argument in those days. But repentance through force is very brittle. Pauper apprentices, poor little wretches, with each one of whom the master got £5 premium from the Guardians, poured in, and in five years' time the workmen rose a second time. In 1727 an Act was passed making the breaking of a Frame a hanging offence. Brute force again! It had little effect. From 1740 to 1750 the men in the trade were nearly starving, and more Frames were destroyed than ever. In 1745 the conditions appear to have become too abominable for public decency, and even the Company of Masters created bye-laws, confirmed by the Lord Chancellor, restricting apprenticeship once more. But nothing happened. The trade was removed to Nottingham. The old Company, a London organization, lost hold and presently became moribund. The men were faced with the manufacturers in a new county, and unbound by any law or custom whatever. At first it seemed that better days were coming. There was a boom in the trade in 1750 and the men formed a strong Trade Union, one of the first of the modern type—"The Stocking-Makers Association for Mutual Protection." They even influenced the election of a Member of Parliament and co-operated with the old London Masters' Company which, feeling its decay, had stretched out hands

of friendship to the men. But nothing availed. The practice which had now begun of hiring out these Frames to the men in their homes by owners and employers, and thereby making each man's family into a little out-working factory, weakened the position of the Trade Union. Besides, by fighting for a limitation of supply of workers at a time when trade required increasing numbers, it was struggling with an incoming tide.

In 1778 the total earnings of an able-bodied man in the trade were about 6*s*. a week, but out of this they had to pay rent for their Frames. A Committee of the House of Commons investigated and proved the case of the workmen, but the masters were too strong and the logic of their arguments against limitation of output too great. Nothing at all was done. Strikes followed, and then further petitions to Parliament the following year "for regulation of the trade."

These petitions came from Nottingham, Tewkesbury, Godalming, Derby, London, Westminster and Northampton. Witnesses were seen from all these places which showed that the Trade Union was a thoroughly intelligent body, able to order its own affairs. The witnesses proved that while wages had fallen continuously during the past twenty years, the price of wool had been rising; and that in spite of this, the Employers were, even now, striving to reduce wages still further—*below* 6*s*. *weekly*. And out of these earnings a man was expected to pay 1*s*. 3*d*. to 2*s*. in rent for his Frame. If a workman bought a frame of his own he was refused work altogether. He had to pay the rent when he was sick, when work was slack, even when there was no work, or even if the Employer, though work was to be done, withheld the materials. It was proved that many Employers deliberately did this, so that for less outlay they could get more rent from a larger number of persons.

No wonder workers were found to be in a state of

starvation, and, as was proved, were in a position of absolute dependence upon their Employers, and obliged to accept any terms that might be imposed.

The matter was fully made known to Parliament, and a Bill was brought in with only one dissentient to "regulate the trade of frame-work knitting, and for preventing the frauds and abuses therein."

It is difficult to imagine in these days that these disclosures, formally proved to the House, did not cause such a convulsion of public opinion against the masters in this trade that criminal prosecutions were taken against the worst offenders by the Public Prosecutor.

But nothing of the kind happened. The Employers put in a counter-petition ; a new committee was formed, took evidence and reported. It confirmed the findings of its predecessors. The Bill passed the Second Reading—but only by twenty-four to twenty-three. On the Third Reading it was thrown out by fifty-two to eighteen.

Thus all the money, organization and effort of the Frame-work-knitters Union and all the sympathy of Parliament availed nothing in the cause of humanity against the biting commercial policy of the men who held command of the trade. But this was not the end. Upon the news coming to the people they broke loose once more. The Frames of those manufacturers who were chiefly responsible for the rejection of the Bill were promptly burnt to the tune of 300, property of all kinds was destroyed and a house burnt down.

Again a scare took place among Employers. Promises of amendment were made and peace was restored. A powerful factor in this result was that public opinion, such as it was, did help the men. Even the journeyman who was said to have fired the house, was acquitted.

But no permanent benefit was gained by the workers. The masters "formed a Union of their own" and

threatened to manufacture their goods in France. This in 1780!

The misery went on. In 1810 the district of Hinckley, we are told, was in a constant state of riot. The men, however, were successful once. The old Chartered Company in London was still alive, and when on an appeal from the men in 1810 it roused itself and prosecuted a manufacturer for taking apprentices in violation of the bye-laws of the Company, the Employer was convicted and fined one shilling!

It was almost the last act and deed of the old Company, which ceased to exist two years later. But it was the beginning of a new movement by the men. They ceased to petition Parliament. In 1814 they formed a Union of all branches of the trade. They approached directly and made bargains with the masters, and struck hard at intervals when the bargains were not kept, but they turned their attention to union among themselves, and to fashioning a weapon out of the Strike, and in their Organization, which should enable them to stand on their own feet without help of law, public opinion, or any outside influence whatsoever.

We have given this struggle in detail because it is an example of the immorality, or to express it more correctly, the non-morality of Industrial organization in the eighteenth century, and of how the Workers fought against oppression.

There is no reason to believe that the bulk of the masters in the Hosiery trade were of a lower type than the average manufacturer in other trades. It must be remembered that, while rich merchants and manufacturers in the clothing and wool trades had become "princes" in their way, and, in many cases, were capable of dealing generously with their employees, the ordinary manufacturer was but a master-craftsman writ large, with all the skin-penny principles of the

newly-made, uneducated owner of property and upstart.

But the basis on which the treatment of the poor Frame-work-knitters really rested was not the rudeness of the class the masters came from. It was the spirit in Industry itself—the spirit of seeking gain and expansion of trade without ruth, without scruple, without consideration of any kind for the weak, or for any moral law.

Nor did this spirit manifest itself in Industry alone. Public opinion in those days was slow to rouse because of the difficulties of travel, the comparative isolation of populous places, and wide gulfs of social separation between country and town. But it could be roused. And it is obvious that the woes of the Frame-work-knitters made some stir. Yet in the end they were left to semi-starvation, and their wrongs were never redressed. The reason was to be found in the *laissez-faire* creed of the time and for many generations afterwards, that the community as a whole had no responsibility for the welfare of any individual or any class. Personal charity; personal fair-dealing, every one, in theory at least, believed in. Every one in respectable society, including the employers of the Frame-work-knitters, declared when he went to church that he loved his neighbour as himself, and honestly believed it.

But there was not a glimmering in the mind of any man in those days, commercial or otherwise, that were such love to be made a reality, steps must be taken to induce that neighbour, especially if he were in your employ, to love *you*.

We were, in truth, a narrow-minded and very parochial people in those days, and beyond our families and our particular class, we did not trouble. Consequently, criminality in private life and in public life flourished amazingly, and in Industrial life the seed was sown for a century of bitter strife and increasing class-separation,

culminating in the " class-conscious " agitation of socialist enthusiasts of modern days. The Frame-work-knitters, because of this selfishness, were thrust against the wall. They had only one course to take—and they took it. They had already formed up the Trade Union for mutual benefit. They now closed the ranks of this Union for mutual protection and mutual aggression against all comers.

Workmen in other trades did the same, animated by a common knowledge that to combine together to fight was their only means, however inadequate, of preventing masters from crushing them into Industrial slavery.

While it has been justly said that neither the oppression of the bad manufacturer nor the economic ruin of hand-workers by the introduction of machinery, was the first cause of Trade Unionism, it is certainly true that the aggressiveness of the Trade Union Movement, which sharpened the weapon of the Strike and hardened it until its use in time became a recognized everyday method of bargaining with Employers, dates from the days of the struggles of the Frame-work-knitters, the Wool-Combers, and other workers against what they deemed to be pitiless persecution.

Thus force begat force ; indifference of the Public to the sufferings of the workers in the eighteenth century was equalled by the indifference of the workers to any damage Strikes might cause the Public, while between the master with his machinery and his new commercial field of operations, and the man with his lessening wage and increasing insecurity of tenure in employment at all, there grew up stark war. Over all, hastening to its climax, was the cataclysm in France, with its reactions over here of terror and suspicion, ending in unreasonable and brutal repression of the people's liberty.

Chapter VII — *The Big Stick*

THE troubles of Industry reached their climax in the time of the French Revolution, and the period of the Napoleonic war.

We have shown that a storm was brewing for fifty years before. In 1799 it burst with the enactment of the Combination Acts (1799–1800).

Since the Middle Ages Industry had been under regulation by law, and as late as the eighteenth century four separate Acts of Parliament were passed to provide for the paying of wages, and other arrangements between masters and men. In these Acts, and others before them, there were clauses prohibiting combinations of either employers or workmen "in restraint of trade." But up to the time of the Terror in France no general attack was made against the self-protection of workers by combination in "Clubs," or "Mutual Benefit Societies," which were, in effect, Trade Unions. A reason for this may have been that at first these combinations were not powerful enough to stem the tide of progress in the leading trades toward cheap labour and the maximum utilization of machinery. They were a new and untried force, and the employers everywhere, as a class, were so strongly entrenched in Parliament, as well as being the possessors of all capital, and were so ignorant of the intellectual and administrative capacity of unlettered workmen, that for many years the habit of organization in Labour

circles went on in practice, though largely illegal in theory, without serious interruption.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century, however, matters assumed a different complexion.

The setting aside of the limitations of Apprenticeship; the flooding of the labour market with untrained boys and girls, and the consequent drop in the wages of journeymen; the labour-saving machinery in hand trades; and the development, as a result, of the factory-system, aroused desperation in workmen everywhere. This despair, after breaking out in furious strikes and riots and disturbances of every description, and, thereby, embittering Employers against Labour, caused the Trade Union movement to develop upon a wide basis, and, naturally, in an aggressive form.

The attitude of Employers towards this growth of Labour activity is aptly put by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb (*History of Trade Unionism*, p. 69):—

> "The Operatives' combinations were regarded as being in the nature of Mutiny against their employers and masters: destructive of the 'discipline' necessary to the expansion of trade: and interfering with the right of the employer to 'do what he liked with his own.'"

Here, in a sentence, is expressed the point of view of the Captains of Industry of that time. It could not be otherwise. And if any Trade Unionist takes exception to this point of view, let him ask one of his own leaders in an unguarded moment how much he would not give if he received from the rank and file of his Union the obedience of a regiment of the line!

We have heard a well-known Trade Union official, secretary of a Society of unskilled men, exclaim: "If I had the same discipline among my chaps as Colonel —— with his men, employers in our trade would pay what wages I think right, and not a penny less!"

The fact is that every man bearing the responsibility of leadership feels that he should be obeyed in the interests of those he leads, and when leadership, as in the case of Industry in the eighteenth century, had rested in the hands of a single class for uncountable generations it was merely human nature for the members of that class to view with acute disfavour the serfs of their ancestors struggling for complete emancipation and self-determination. The mental attitude, even of good employers, towards their "hands" was that of a father of the old school towards his boys, into whose minds obedience must be instilled, by any means, as the first duty of life.

In such an atmosphere, with the hand of keen business men of the new school grasping at every opportunity to improve machinery and lower the value of the human factor in Industry, was Trade Unionism, as we know it to-day, born and reared. Baptized with the bitterness of class-oppression; abandoned by its parents—the Gilds; cold-shouldered by the Laws set up for its protection, and only able to secure decent subsistence by self-assertion and self-help of the rudest kind, Organized Labour struggled into being and became a self-conscious force in Industry. Not, as yet, a united force—rather a congregation of separate forces—but with the possibility of becoming, as time passed, anti-social and therefore revolutionary.

There were, indeed, Unions of very skilled craftsmen—such as the shipwrights of Liverpool—which held their own and lived in peace, more or less, with their masters. But the bulk of workmen of all grades formed their "Clubs" in the eighteenth century in the spirit of rebellion, natural to men who feel the hand of all others against them.

Such was the condition of affairs as the eighteenth century drew to a close, and the French Revolution

broke into the Reign of Terror; and all England set its teeth.

A crisis of this kind was an acid test to English society of the time.

The gulf which separated men of all classes, and which all had taken more or less for granted as normal, became fraught now, in the minds of many persons, with most dangerous possibilities. The manners of poor folk in those days, as we have pointed out, were coarse and rough, being shaped upon those of men who employed and disciplined them. The weapon of any strike was a riot, not so easily quelled then as in these days of organized police. Individual members of "respectable" classes went armed if they had to cross lonely heaths, and many a tradesman's or gentleman's body was found stark and stiff on Hounslow and Hampstead by travellers in the early hours of the morning.

The bulk of the English working classes were, in reality, as far removed from crime and from the French "Sans-culotte" as any other set of people in the land, but so little did even the broadest-minded statesman or public man of the time realize this, or understand the nature of labourers and manual workers, that when the danger was pointed out of Trade Clubs being possible centres of Revolutionary conspiracy, the government promptly lost its head.

In 1799 a strike of Mill-wrights, accompanied, probably, with violence, caused a petition from London Engineering Employers to be presented to the House of Commons. They stated, not without justification at such a time, that the strike was "alarming." They asked for the suppression of the Union of men in the engineering trade. A Bill was passed in spite of protests of such men as Sir Francis Burdett and Benjamin Hobhouse. But it did not become an Act because the Government took the whole matter into its hands at the instance of the House of Lords.

On June 17th, 1799, William Pitt himself introduced a Bill against combination of workmen in any trade. He justified his action by alluding to the growth of such combinations throughout the country. He saw nothing but danger in working-class combination, and every one, almost, among all classes, except the Labourers themselves, agreed with him.

This is the salient feature of the whole position. Those who to-day deplore, and rightly, the class bitterness which sections of Labour show towards any other portion of the community, should study in detail what Labour during the infancy of its first conscious life had to suffer at the hands of other classes combining as one behind the Government.

The Combination Act was passed in twenty-four days. The preamble stated that :—

> "Whereas great numbers of journeymen manufacturers and workmen in various parts of this Kingdom have by unlawful meetings and combinations endeavoured to obtain advance of their wages and to effectuate other illegal purposes ; and the laws at present in force against such unlawful conduct have been found to be inadequate to the suppression thereof, whereby it is become necessary that more effectual provision should be made against such unlawful combinations and for preventing such unlawful practices in future and for bringing such offenders to more speedy and exemplary justice."

All agreements for obtaining an advance of wages or for lessening hours of labour—"between journey-men manufacturers or workmen"—were declared null and void. Workmen entering into such agreements were committed to jail for three months or to the house of correction for two months.

The same punishment was to be given to any journeyman or workman who—"by giving money or by persuasion"—or by any means whatsoever should "attempt to prevail on any journeyman hired or to

be hired to quit or to leave his work, service or employment, or who should hinder or prevent or attempt to hinder or prevent any employer from hiring such workman as he might think proper, or who (being hired or employed) should refuse to work with any journeyman employed therein."

It was made a criminal offence even to attend meetings to make such agreements, or to contribute to the support of persons who had quitted work. Any sums so collected were to be forfeit—one half going to the King, *the other half to the informer.*

The last words betray the spirit of the times and the evil practices of the administrative authorities. A premium was deliberately placed upon the services of persons prepared to betray people who, from whatever motive, might try to improve conditions of life for the labouring population.

Well might a learned judge, Sir James Fitzjames Stephens, drily observe in later days (*History of the Criminal Law of England*) :—

> " I should not describe it (the Act) as a system specially adapted and designed to protect freedom of trade. The only freedom for which it seems to me to have been specially solicitous is the freedom of the employers from the coercion of their men."

This was true. As far as any Act of Parliament could go, the Combination Act of 1799–1800 made a strike of any kind a weapon which must harm those who resorted to it infinitely more than those it was aimed against. As far as the Law could do it workmen received every kind of discouragement from attempts, even of the most innocent description, to improve their own condition as a class, or even to maintain any decent standard of life.

Thus was the big stick applied in Industry to workmen who tried to improve conditions of labour. They were

to work, not to think. In theory, a labourer could still demand what he thought fit for a job—as an individual—but if he called in the help of his mates against a grad-grind employer, in any circumstances, he committed a criminal act.

Any person who has had experience of the operation of unjust laws will understand without explanation or evidence what must ultimately happen as the direct result of such an Act.

The workman, previous to 1799, had become in the opinion of quiet folk who knew not the hardship of low wages, and the spectre of unemployment through introduction of machinery, a very tumultuous and disagreeable fellow indeed. That there was great intelligence, self-respect and pride of citizenship among large numbers of the workers who organized the Trade Clubs of the artisans from Ship-wrights to Frame-work-knitters, was not imagined by the general public before 1799. But no sooner was the Act put into force and its effects realized, than the attitude of people unbiased by narrow class interest towards working men began to undergo a change which twenty-four years later was to result not only in a complete repeal of the whole statute, but in the birth of democracy among all classes.

"The Labour Question," wrote Mr. Gladstone in 1892, "may be said to have come into public view simultaneously with the repeal . . . of the Combination Laws which had made it an offence for labouring men to unite for the purpose of procuring by joint action, through peaceful means, an augmentation of their wages. From this point progress began."

It was the blood and tears of the sufferers under the iniquitous laws, however, which taught Englishmen that freedom is the birthright of every man, and that it is as criminal to rob the humblest person of such a birthright as to enter a person's house and steal.

The first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century

were a veritable martyrdom for every workman who cherished ideals and cared for the welfare of his fellows. Men of sober, respectable lives, who taught their children to reverence law and do their duty; to live decently and obey the Commandments, were prosecuted for trivial offences, convicted upon the evidence of spies, and sent to prison for years, or seized by press-gangs for the French wars.

"Justice," wrote Francis Place, then a prosperous man and an employer of labour, "was entirely out of the question; the working man could seldom obtain a hearing before a magistrate—never without impatience or insult; and never could they calculate on even an approximation to a rational conclusion. Could an accurate account be given of proceedings of hearings before magistrates, trials at Sessions and in the Courts of the King's Bench, the gross injustice, the foul invective and terrible punishments inflicted, would not, after a few years have passed away, be credited on any but the best of evidence."

The evidence, however, is there to be seen. The blot on the escutcheon of Industry cannot be wiped out. The brand of Cain rests upon employers, judges and law-administrators of those days.

Yet not on all. Place himself is an instance to the contrary; and Mr. and Mrs. Webb, in their *History of Trade Unionism,* qualify their indictment of the Act by admitting that "in many cases we find employers apparently accepting and conniving at their men's combinations." In 1804 a joint committee of masters and journeymen in the Printing trade was formed, authorized by their respective bodies to frame regulations for the future payment of labour, and resulting in the elaborate "Scale" of 1805, signed by both masters and men. The London Coopers kept their organization intact and recognized; the Brushmakers the same; also the Tailors and even the Frame-work-knitters. In the case of the Carpenters in Preston, Minute books from 1819 to 1824 "chronicle an apparently unconcealed and

unmolested existence—no items of expense of defending their officers against persecutions—several payments for advertisements and public meetings, and a very large expenditure in beer."

So England, even in those days of stress and unjust laws, was England still ; and where employers were just men, and believed in their fellows—though of a different class—good-will was still possible, and the law remained a dead letter.

Nevertheless, the power was there for bad men to use, and they used it without scruple in the hope that by intimidation, and the making of Trade Unionism a crime before the law, and Strikes a terror to the strikers, the labourer in field and factory would be made to understand that he must keep his place. By this means he was to cease to cherish any illusions that he could have any part whatever in deciding the conditions under which he should work, or the share of the proceeds of Industry to which he was entitled.

Chapter VIII *The Beginning of Wisdom*

IN 1799 and for twenty-five years afterwards the Youth, Industry, was confined to the house, and beaten if he went out of doors, by a nervy and distracted father who feared he would lose all control over his son if he were allowed freedom or exercise.

Of course the treatment failed egregiously in its purpose. The front door was locked, but it was possible to force the window, which, indeed, was often opened from outside, and masters and men in certain trades went on as before. And though it would seem that the majority of employers took advantage of the clauses of the Acts forbidding workmen to combine in any form to advance or even preserve their standard of life, and, as hard business men, forced upon Labour the hardest terms they could, yet no sign appears that the back-bone of that portion of Labour which believed in combination as a devout man believes in his religion, was ever broken.

But we must not conclude that either the Employers who promoted the Acts, or the Magistrates who helped heartily in the enforcing of them against innocent men, were all persons steeped in iniquity and hatred of the poor journeyman as a class.

It was an honest conviction on the part of the general public of that day that the men in Labour ranks who strove for united action among workers in any form, were the worst of their class—conspirators and dangerous agitators. Persons who, had they the power—even if

there were no French Revolution going on—would undermine the Constitution and turn Society topsy-turvy.

Undoubtedly Pitt believed this, and with him numbers of men who had no sympathy at all with grad-grinders, and labour exploitation. It was believed that the best men among industrial workers were those who minded their own business and put the interests of their masters before that of their mates. It was argued that workers who did this would gain most in the long run, even for themselves and their class. It was believed that the Combination Acts would encourage and help the honest labourer who loved his job, and only penalize the noisy tongue-wagger who disliked work, and wanted, selfishly, to get as much and do as little as possible.

This conviction had no justification in fact. Mistakes were made by the "Club-men." Methods of enforcing or upholding the rights of Labour to fair remuneration used by them were often brutal, stupid and destructive in the worst sense; but the evidence that, on the whole, throughout all the preceding century, they consistently appealed to the Law, and not to force, that they strove for justice and not for illicit profit or unfair advantage, has never been questioned.

The records of the huge sums spent in Petitions to Parliament, through recognized legal channels, by all the Societies formed by the Journeymen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for maintenance of old safeguards and privileges, and not for innovations or socialistic levelling of profits, are to be found in the Parliamentary papers of the time. Frequently they were recognized, and even supported, by the House of Commons, and decisions given in their favour. In any case, the practices of these men, plain members of the working class, were constitutional, and at what personal sacrifice they carried on their almost hopeless quest!

But the loyalty they showed towards the rank and file who subscribed the money needed to pay for legal help, which often approached heroism, was never rewarded by anything more substantial than the confidence of their fellows.

Their quest, we say, was hopeless—as hopeless as the command of Canute to the sea. Modernized Industry could not be carried on under the restrictions of a former generation. Economy of production and a vast increase of output were imperative and fundamental as the only basis on which the rapidly increasing population of Great Britain, and the needs of all classes for a higher standard of life, could be provided for.

The " right to live " is a stirring Slogan, but the oldest law in creation is that which demands of a human-creature the capacity to provide for himself the wherewithal. Nature demands this, and there is no striking against nature.

So the quest for long apprenticeships and limitations of trade long out of date failed, and there was heart-sickness and despair among masses of men who saw a system closing about their lives which made the few rich and the many poor. Then they struck—violently, blindly and with tumult, and destroyed much. Worst of all, they destroyed the sympathy and understanding of the public. So, in the crisis of the time, the youth was thrashed with all that disregard for humanity which characterized the paternal punishment of children of those days.

Then, slowly but certainly, a reaction set in. Employers of understanding began to find that something was radically wrong. Cheap labour, then as now, was bad labour, and where a great number of men were employed something besides discipline and fines was needed to secure manufacture of goods of a high standard which would fetch the required price in the market. That something was the good-will and the voluntary willing co-operation of the labourer and artisan.

Another factor in the early years of the nineteenth century which undermined the whole foundation of the Combination Acts was the scarcity of labour as men were drafted out for military and naval service.

The pressing of leaders of Trade Clubs and Societies, and of numbers of the most intelligent workers was a serious handicap to manufacturers and others who needed good men.

But, above all, as the incidence of these unjust and indefensible laws began to show itself—and it was discovered again and again that secret societies took the place of open and above-board trade combinations, and instances accumulated of outrageous acts of injustice by certain magistrates and persons in authority interested in the worst-paid trades and occupations—public opinion began to veer round in an opposite direction, and men of every class felt that there was something fundamentally wrong with Industrial affairs.

It was the genius and force of one man, however, as generally happens, which lit and applied the match, and found the way by diligent application and untiring determination, to blow into space this foul excrescence upon British Law.

This man was Francis Place, of Westminster, who began life as a leather-breeches maker, had been himself a Trade Union leader, and suffered the worst hardships of a striker in his trade before he was five and twenty ; but by the time the Combination Acts were passed he was a Tailor and an employer on his own account.

We have quoted his scathing comment upon the administration of the Acts by certain Justices. In 1810, the Master Tailors of London asked him to help in destroying the Union of Journeymen Tailors. His action was intensely characteristic of the man. "I was applied to, to subscribe," he says ; "I refused, yet notwithstanding this I was appointed a member of their

Committee. I attended once, and explained to them very calmly and deliberately the reasons why I did not and could not concur with them, and why I thought it advisable for them to desist and make one attempt to procure the repeal of all the laws against combination of workmen."

"I gave no offence," he says quaintly. Perhaps not, but it is not surprising that such remarks "produced a stormy ebullition among those who took a different view of the matter."

Nevertheless—and this first-hand record shows the feeling against the Acts even among employers with grievances against their men—"several Master Tailors called me afterwards and thanked me," and "Two of the principal master tailors (at the meeting) told the Chairman that they concurred completely in all that I had said and wished my evidence should stand as theirs also."

Place further says that none of the workers in the trade ever thanked him, or took any action to promote repeal of the Acts. This, he says, was because "the workmen could not be persuaded to believe that the repeal of the laws was possible."

He goes on to say that the same opinion prevailed among men of other classes whom he consulted, even among those who believed that the laws were bad.

But Place was a person who cared very little for the opinions of others when they did not coincide with his own. He waited and watched, and in 1814 took off his coat and went to work.

A complete narrative of all that he did and contrived before results began to appear is one of the most interesting episodes of a personal kind in Industrial history.[1]

He was a prosperous man, with a growing business, and a very large family. A great reader and active politician,

[1] *The Life of Francis Place*, by Graham Wallas.

his finger was ever in all sorts of pies, yet, having set himself the task of ending what he considered to be a disgraceful injustice and a dishonour to the Industrial community, he found time to create, develop and finally bring to a head an agitation which swept the Combination Acts off the Statute Book, and made them a byword for all time as Laws subversive of liberty and healthy growth in Industrial life and organization.

First of all he went to the Press. Whenever he saw a dispute between master and men mentioned in the newspaper he managed to get into communication with one or both sides, and to get a statement published that the repeal of the Acts was the only solution of Industrial troubles.

He wrote to Men's Societies everywhere, stating his purpose, and asking for information. Here he had infinite difficulty.

"Working men," he says, "had been too often deceived to be willing to trust anyone who was not well known to them," and one, he might have added, whom most of them believed to be inevitably an enemy, for was he not an employer?

But Place took no umbrage. "I was resolved to serve them as much as I could. I understood them throughout and was neither put from my purpose nor offended with them."

Gradually his work told. The Press began to take the matter up—even *The Times*, a newspaper which had, before this, consistently taken sides against the workers.

In 1818 he assisted, with friends, in finding money for the publication of a little weekly paper rejoicing in the title of the *Gorgon* and owned by a wool-comber.

This paper he filled with facts about the evil effects of the Law and its administrations and circulated it among members of Parliament and other influential persons—

even manufacturers. In 1819 he hoped to get the House of Commons to appoint a Committee on Labour to examine the working of the Acts. This, however, he could not do at the time. But his propaganda proceeded apace, and in 1822 Joseph Hume, M.P., the Member who afterwards bore the brunt of the fighting when Repeal of the Acts was moved, told Place that so many members were in favour of action that he intended to bring in a Bill that year. But the time was not ripe. The vested interests for prevention of liberty among workmen to combine were now thoroughly awake; and Place, as cautious in organization as he was determined in battle, refused to hurry, but continued to educate Parliament and inform Public opinion. Such journals as the *Scotsman*, the *Star*, and the *Chronicle* were now partisans for Reform, and with *The Times* impartial, men began furiously to think upon the issue from points of view never previously considered.

A significant incident of the time was a friendship between a Mr. George White, Clerk to the House of Commons, and Gravener Henson, a Nottingham Bobbin-maker, and leader of the Frame-work-Knitters Union. Henson had been a warrior in the cause, and had suffered many terms of imprisonment. These two—Government Official and Strike Leader—now took action independently of Place and his group. They got a certain Peter Moore, M.P. for Coventry, to obtain leave to introduce a Bill of Repeal, greatly to Place's annoyance, as, by so doing, they pushed aside Joseph Hume, whom he was piloting into action.

This was in March, 1823. But Mr. Moore's Bill was what Place called a "bug-a-boo." It scared the House and produced nothing but opposition. Place tried to persuade Hume to ask for a Select Committee for inquiry into the Combination Acts. But Huskisson, a friend of Hume, intervened, and tried to limit the reference to

"Emigration of Artizans and Exportation of Machinery." Hume was inclined to yield, and had it not been for Place his courage would have failed at the critical moment. But the grim old Campaigner was a man no one easily could hold when he had once made up his mind.

A letter of his is on record concerning matters as they stood and pointing out the right way for Parliament to deal with the relations of masters and men, which is so remarkable for its insight and breadth of view at that time that we give it in full.

He deals faithfully with Mr. Peter Moore as a "pig-headed" man, who must be put on any Committee formed, else he will bring in his Bill, and arouse passion and bitterness on both sides, where calm reasoning is the great essential. Then he goes on to say :—

"The business is really very simple and it lies in a small space. Repeal every troublesome and dangerous enactment, and enact very little in their place. Leave workmen and their employers as much as possible at liberty to make their own bargains in their own way. This is the way to prevent disputes ; but when they do occur, leave them to settle them among themselves, with an appeal to a Justice of the Peace in cases (they will be very few) in which parties cannot come to a decision. Let the Magistrate decide on the evidence before him, and make his decision final."

Mr. Hume took Place's advice and got permission of the House to form a Select Committee to inquire into the Combination Laws.

Now the real struggle began. Place offered to attend and assist in marshalling witnesses and collating their evidence. He was kept out. He says it was because "I was neither a member of the honourable House, nor even a gentleman." We may be permitted to doubt whether this had anything to do with it. He was too well known to be a dangerous partisan.

As things fell out, the opponents to the repeal of the Acts might have saved themselves the trouble. Hume

was a stout fighter and faithful to his master behind the scenes. Place scoured the country with correspondence; threw open his house to all working-people who came up to Town to testify—examined them, guided them, and prepared every man in detail for the ordeal he would have to undergo before the Committee. Day and night he laboured, and Hume had every fact and argument served up in lucid, convincing form. Mr. George White, the enterprising government official, was made Clerk to the Committee, and at once became a devoted colleague of Francis Place.

Thus fortified, the men who fought for justice and reform pursued their campaign with a force and a wisdom which carried everything before it.

It was a herculean task, for these workmen on whose testimony everything depended, were not easily handled.

"They were filled with false notions," Place complains; "all attributing their distresses to wrong causes—all expected a great and sudden rise in wages when the Combination Acts should be repealed; not one of them had any ideas whatever of the connection between wages and population. I had to discuss everything with them most carefully, to arrange and prepare everything, so completely did these things occupy my mind that for three months I had hardly any rest."

Trade Union Officials and Labour Members of the "Honourable House" to-day will appreciate and understand the trials of Mr. Place caused by the impulsiveness of these sturdy veterans from Lancashire, Yorkshire and Northumberland. As in Cromwell's day, patience and yet more patience; patience all the time, is the quality most needed by those who would lead Democracy.

But Place never faltered or grew weary: the Select Committee reported to the House; the House, unable to resist the evidence before them, accepted the Report: the House of Lords, individually canvassed by Place and his Agents, offered no resistance, and the fight was won.

Three Acts were passed :—

(i) An Act to repeal the laws relating to the Combination of Workmen, and for other purposes therein mentioned. (5 Geo. 4. c. 95.)

(ii) An Act to consolidate and amend the laws relative to the arbitration of disputes between masters and workmen. (5 Geo. 4. c. 96.)

(iii) An Act to repeal the laws relative to artisans going abroad. (5 Geo. 4. c. 97.)

It was an extraordinary victory, the more so as it was largely the work of one master-mind, interpreting and using with marvellous cleverness the reaction of public opinion against unjust and useless legislation.

It remained to be seen how Industry on both sides would take the "medicine." The House of Commons of that day, and the House of Lords still more so, did not represent Industry at all. The Landed interest still had the majority of votes. The leaders of all parties were unaware, as yet, of what Industry could do, for weal or woe, for the Nation. To a degree difficult to realize to-day all Legislators of that time represented forces outside trade and commerce. These forces were fired with the belief that the Combination Laws were wrong in principle, and had failed in practice, so they repealed them. But the country had still to reckon with Industry itself. With workmen flushed with victory and the belief that they would now come into their own—or hold their employers helpless ; with employers who, bitterly resenting the interference of the State with "rights" they held to be sacred and absolute, squared their shoulders, set their teeth, and prepared to fight—their backs against the wall.

Chapter IX — *Wild Oats*

THE door of the prison confining Industry was unlocked by the repeal of the Combination Acts. The youth was free.

But complete liberty of action may have serious consequences for a young man, unless he has been carefully prepared for it, and has acquired self-control and, above all, the habit of consideration for others.

Labour had never received such training. The mass of employers at that time had not imagined that consideration for the feelings of anyone, whether of each other or of their workmen, was a factor which counted in business. Like many other men, they reserved such kindness for private life.

Then, as a finishing touch to the hard years since the Gilds broke down, had come the twenty-five years punishment under the Combination Acts.

No wonder then that Labour staggered out into the world where he was free to act for himself full of bitter determination to make some one smart for all that he had suffered, and to win back, without any delay, as much as he could lay hands upon of what he had lost, or fancied he had lost, during the dark years ; an attitude which immediately caused Employers, on their side, to arm themselves.

The strange thing was that those to whom the workmen owed most, and who had opportunity to know them best, least expected any such result

Francis Place wrote to Sir Francis Burdett in 1825 :—

"Combinations will soon cease to exist. Men have been kept together only by the oppression of the Laws. He knows nothing of the working people who can suppose that, when left at liberty to act for themselves, without being driven into permanent associations by the oppression of the laws, they will continue to contribute money for distant and doubtful experiments, for uncertain and precarious benefits."

Never did any man, full of insight into the hearts and characters of individuals, so misconceive the nature of masses of men, as Place, when they belonged to a class different from his own.

Yet Place had been a workman himself and a Trade Unionist, and, unlike so many self-made men, he preserved all his life a warm, very human and sincere sympathy with workmen, and even strove enthusiastically, as we have seen, to enable them to reach a position of independent strength. But by temperament and character, Place was at bottom a middle-class individualist. He had won his wealth by his own force and without the help of any man. He never shared the instinctive desire of men who had not the opportunity or strength to raise themselves alone above the limitations of their particular environment—yet bitterly resented such limitations—to get together into Brotherhoods and sink their individuality in corporate action.

It has been often said, and is still believed, that Trade Unionism owes its birth and its strength simply to the oppression of Employers upon Workers.

As Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, and other authorities on the side of the workers have pointed out, this is not true, or at most, only partly true.

Oppression and injustice have from earliest times caused Strikes and Revolts. Trade Unionism came into being gradually after Industry began to take shape as an organization in which the few were powerful and were

striving for riches, and the many were poor and might grow poorer.

The effect of this evolution in Industry, an evolution which was inevitable under the social conditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was to draw together the men cut off from master-craftsmanship into a separate class which, apart from mere material needs, found strength and solace in misfortune in close brotherhood and common action.

As time passed and the social gulf between master and workman grew wider, this instinctive brotherhood among working class men gained strength and for material purposes took shape in "Trade Clubs and Societies," which gradually approximated more and more to the modern Trade Union. But these Trade Unions were themselves the result of an elemental craving for kinship, common to all men, and which the poor Journeyman could then, and can even now, only enjoy if he forms or joins a Society of men of his own trade or class.

The Combination Acts were passed to discourage such Societies from being formed, by preventing any material benefit to workmen arising from combination.

They succeeded, as far as material gain was concerned. Certain strong "aristocratic" Unions held together. In some cases combinations of workmen, encouraged by the masters themselves, were allowed to exist, but, as a whole, the material power and utility of Trade Unions were crushed for the time by the Acts. A workman gained very little indeed, except danger and trouble, by joining a Trade Club between 1799 and 1824.

Nevertheless, they joined Secret Societies by thousands, and one of the strongest pieces of evidence which convinced Parliament that the Acts had been a failure was the number of such Societies which had been formed during these discouraging years.

The spirit of Trade Unionism, then, being the instinc-

tive clinging together of man to man of a class because of their social isolation from men of other classes, was stimulated and strengthened beyond belief by the operation of the Combination Acts, even while their power of action was paralysed by force. It happened therefore, inevitably, that the first result of Industry's freedom was a tremendous uprising of aggressive Unionism, accompanied by demands upon employers which the emancipated workmen immediately proceeded to enforce with the weapon of the Strike.

Such action was calculated, of course, to cause a violent reaction of public opinion against the men, and to supply masters with a cogent argument against combination. A more serious blow to poor Francis Place and the middle-class friends of the Unions could not be imagined. It is a convincing testimonial to their earnestness and balance of mind that they kept their heads, and though they reproached the workmen in certain Unions for excesses, stood firmly by them all, and faced with cool courage and determination the onslaught of the employers in Parliament for a renewal of the Acts. But a heavier task was seldom laid on the shoulders of any man than that which Place accepted when Labour broke loose in 1824.

It was a time of good trade, the time when Labour always has its day. Everywhere it took advantage of its enhanced value to go to war. At Glasgow, where workmen had been especially badly used under the Acts, the operatives not only struck for better wages, but destroyed machines and property. The cotton-spinners struck at Manchester. The shipping trade on the Tyne was paralysed for a time because the seamen refused to sail with non-unionist sailors or even officers. In Dublin matters were worse still: the men formed a joint committee of representatives of several industries and terrorized employers. In Sheffield the men demanded

double wages for three days a week work. London Ship-wrights drew up rates for piece-work which made the employers tear their hair—and so the epidemic spread.

When Parliament met in 1825 there was a universal cry from all Employers engaged in these trades for the Combination Acts to be re-introduced.

The House again appointed a Committee to investigate and report, but this time it was a committee of men selected by those who believed that the repeal of the Combination Acts had been a political crime. The only man on it willing to do justice to the workmen was Joseph Hume himself.

But Hume, with Place at his elbow, was a most formidable antagonist. Place threw all his old energy into the fight. He relates the struggle vividly.[1] Additional members were put on to the Committee—"half a dozen of Hume's partisans," says Place. A delay occurred through the Easter holidays, and Place worked day and night to get delegates from Unions all over the country to offer evidence. He collected funds himself and made every sympathiser do likewise. He wrote pamphlets and circulated them among members of the Commons.

> "Nothing that could be done by me," he writes, "by Mr. Hume, by the Trades Committees (which he had formed out of London Trade Unionists of repute) or by others, was omitted to be done, and the effect produced was such as could not have been easily anticipated, nor very easily credited."

It was altogether an amazing business, when the circumstances of the time, and the power of Employers in Parliament, are considered. These gentlemen had thoroughly alarmed every class above that of Labour. They could show destruction of property, and restraint

[1] *The Life of Francis Place*, Graham Wallas, pp. 228–240.

of trade in its worst form, by Trade Unions and bodies of workmen in all parts of the country. They had a great opportunity.

But, as often happens in such cases, they tried to prove too much, and when their friends on the Committee drafted a Bill it was so extreme that shrewd men of practical knowledge like Place were able to pick holes by the dozen in its provisions. Also, confident that anything they put forward would pass the House in its present temper, they took small trouble over details.

Place's tactics were extremely characteristic. He would have made a fortune as a lawyer. The Attorney-General had prepared the Bill—a legal luminary who knew nothing of Industry. This draft Bill never came before the House at all, so we need not waste time upon it. It is sufficient to say that Joseph Hume, instructed by Place, was able to convince the Attorney-General that his work, in Place's words " was the most obnoxious nonsense that had ever been proposed to Parliament."

We do not know whether the Officer of the Crown would have endorsed their language, but—" Mr. Attorney Copley," we hear, " saw the force of the objections (put by Mr. Hume), shrank from the task, and declined drawing the Bill."

This was a heavy blow for the majority of the Committee. But they stuck to their guns (and the Bill) and printed copies of it were to be distributed to the M.P.'s before the Second Reading.

Then came Place's second blow. Petitions fell like rain upon the House from Trade Societies all over the country. Workmen Delegates crowded the Lobbies of the House, and the Members of the Committee itself " could hardly get to their room or from it, so completely was the passage blocked by the men, and so well had they been instructed not readily to make way for the Members."

This, of course, was a sensation to the M.P.'s who were not on the Committee, especially as we gather that the workmen delegates were perfectly respectable and very creditable and pleasant representatives of their class. This was probably the best weapon of all, for in itself it rebutted the accusations of the other side that workmen were ruffianly blackguards.

The practical result was that the Committee consented, at last, to take evidence from delegates before finally presenting their Bill for the House to pass into law. They had previously refused to consider any defence from the workmen.

The breach in the ramparts of the citadel of the reactionaries was followed up with great address and vigour by Place. "No one thing," Place ends the account of the attack, "was omitted, every possible advantage was taken of even the most minute circumstance, and it was by these and Mr. Hume's extraordinary exertions that the intentions of Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Peel were at length so completely defeated, and the Bill called Mr. Wallace's Bill was passed."

This Bill reinforced the Repeal of the Combination Acts, only inserting clauses which brought all Trade Unions under the Common Law, and enacted that, while men and masters might combine to promote their industrial interests, any act of intimidation or violence committed by such combination or in any circumstances connected therewith, was punishable by imprisonment with hard labour "not exceeding three calendar months."

The reward to Place himself for his services to workmen was a "handsome silver vase, paid for by a penny-a-week subscription" from the seamen of the Tyne and Wear and "an incomparable set of knives and forks in a case" from the Cutlers of Sheffield.

The history of Industry, though it can show in every

crisis evidence of sympathy and substantial help for labouring men from men of other classes, has scarcely any parallel in the services of Place and Hume and their colleagues in regard to the Combination Acts.

These men—employers, or middle-class and upper-class representatives, won freedom for Workers which could not otherwise have been theirs for generations. Moreover, they won it in the first instance without any help from the Trade Unions. Even when, in 1825, this was given, the leadership and the heat and burden of the conflict with the Conservative reactionaries was borne by Place and his men. Yet beyond the personal acknowledgments mentioned, we can find no trace of any change of attitude toward people of other classes on the part of Labour.

This was a tragedy and a lost opportunity, which caused Labour terrible suffering and brought infinite demoralization into Industry itself during succeeding generations.

Had the liberal-minded men of the Classes and the leaders of all groups of Labour, forged links of comradeship over the charter of freedom for legitimate Industrial Combinations which the Act of 1825 provided, what a difference would have been made in the pages of Industrial history, which ends with the rise and downfall of Chartism.

But it could not be. Labour, glad as it was to avail itself of the ability and enthusiasm of Place, distrusted as deeply as ever men of that class, and were welded too closely into their own class-brotherhood to let into their confidence any man outside their ranks. While Place, on his part, though an honest idealist and the comrade to Labour for freedom and social improvement of its conditions, was a politician first and last, as well as an individualist, and had no idea of identifying himself permanently with a non-political social or industrial movement to re-create the conditions under which the

bulk of labouring people had had to exist for centuries.

So the chance of an alliance between Middle Class and Working Class to attack at the root the injustice and abuses of the industrial system, as they had together attacked and slain the Combination Acts, was lost. It was not to come again for many generations.

Chapter X *Reaction*

THE lost opportunity in 1825 of united action between Place and liberal-minded members of Parliament and the leaders of Trade Unionism to create a new spirit between classes was no one's fault. Such action was impossible from circumstances over which no man, or class of men, of that day had any control.

Real union, whether between individuals or communities, can only be consummated if there is a recognized basis of equality betweeen them. Now—though in 1825 among workmen of that time there were numbers of intelligent men, of good capability and sturdy character, there were none who in point of education and habit of command in great issues, could compare with their friends in other classes. All the initiative in the campaign against the oppressive Acts, and the management of affairs, lay in the hands of Place and his colleagues. The workmen delegates helped Place in every way and received respectful treatment from him. There was no taint of patronage in his attitude towards them. But he was master; they obeyed. He was the benefactor: they the beneficiaries.

This made partnership impossible. The Labour men, though sincerely grateful to Place and his colleagues, for their invaluable help in time of need obviously resented his slightly pedagogic methods and advice. They were not educated men, with any great breadth of view; but they knew their class—he did not. They knew the

power of the growing idealism among workmen which was rooting everywhere and was to produce Chartism and, very nearly, Revolution. He had no conception of it.

So, Parliament having given freedom to Industry to settle its own affairs and workmen to combine for any purpose and in any way so long as they did so peaceably, Place and his new allies parted company and went their different ways.

It could not, we know, have been otherwise, but what a catastrophe it was.

Never was it so vital to Labour, to Industry and to humanity itself, that this great service of men of other classes to the Trade Union movement in the repeal of the Combination Acts, should have spread and deepened to a true understanding of the needs of Industrial workers as a community.

The darkest cloud of depression in trade and upheaval of all decent industrial conditions for the labouring class ever known in this country was gathering in 1825 and burst upon the country before the end of the year.

There was a serious shrinkage of trade. But this was not the worst. Industrial affairs had reached an acute stage of transition which, under any circumstances, must have caused very serious suffering to the poor, and which, as it was, brought them into such terrible straits as to convulse society, and lay upon hundreds and thousands of workers in a number of trades a degradation, an utter misery and an abiding bitterness of outlook upon life and other classes which has been at the root of the worst of our industrial troubles to the present day.

A vivid analysis of the industrial position of this time and for twenty years later is given by the late Mark Hovell in his book *The Chartist Movement,* ably edited by Professor T. F. Tout :—

"The inventions and discoveries of the previous century," he writes, "had provided the framework of a new industrial society, but the real social development, with the ideas, political and economic, and the new social relationships which grew out of it, appeared in full force only in the generation which followed the battle of Waterloo.

"It was then that the victory of machine production became an acknowledged fact, and with it the supremacy of large-scale production and large-scale organization over domestic production and organization. The rapid growth of production for the foreign market gave to Industry a more speculative and competitive character, whilst the lack of real knowledge and experience gave rise to rash and ill-considered ventures which helped to give so alarming a character to the crisis of 1816, 1826 and 1836."

Industry, in plain words, became a gamble, and a class of manufacturers, or rather, classes of manufacturers—for there were several distinct grades—came into existence, possessing the blind selfishness of outlook, and the inhuman lack of consideration for the victims of his selfishness which is the trade-mark of a gambler.

Money was thrown into manufacture of goods for markets which only existed in the imagination of the speculator, or could only be exploited if some particularly favourable circumstances arose for sale of the articles at an exorbitant price to—say, South-Sea Islanders. The workmen employed in such manufacture, unprotected by any strongly organized trade union on modern lines, were ruthlessly over-worked to get out the stuff; abominably underpaid, because of the risks taken and the need for lowest production costs and highest profits, and then, when the illusion of any regular market vanished, turned off at a week's, or even a day's notice.

Where the speculation was a sound one and the manufacturer became rich, he immediately removed himself as far as possible from the vicinity of the Works, and gave up any pretence of personal interest in the welfare

of his labouring colleagues in Industry. They were left to sicken in insanitary dwellings and environment which can only be realized nowadays by those who will take the trouble to study the Parliamentary Papers of the time when, a little later, the public conscience was awakened and the Factory Acts were passed.

There were, of course, numbers of firms and companies in every trade who cared for their workpeople humanely; but, in these years Industry was overflowing with persons who held no traditions of responsibility for the human factor in production. The transition from domestic manufacture in the homes of workers, or small factories, close by, in which the master himself lived, to enormous works and shops holding thousands of men and governed by foremen and managers under the Boards of Limited Companies, began in these years. It threw out of gear all the old machinery of human contact between master and man, and provided nothing in its place.

Thus the Merchant-Adventurer of Elizabeth's day, now a plain trader, became a very powerful and necessary person to Industry. He alone knew just where the foreign markets were, and he possessed capital to buy on his own account. Therefore he began to control manufacture and manufacturers and to become a determining factor in the ebb and flow of employment of labour.

Now this Merchant, of course, had no interest whatever, or direct concern, with the conditions under which Labour was employed or lived. He moved and had his being in another world altogether—the world of barter and commerce. Cost and quality of goods on the one hand, and supply, against the prices obtainable, and the demand at home and abroad for the articles, were his sole consideration.

In these days every one knows, even the most convinced Communist, that at least as regards dealing with foreign markets the merchant is a necessary part of Industrial

organization. It is difficult to realize, therefore, how such a person was looked upon by Labour a hundred years ago, and how terribly his increasing hold of the machine complicated the position.

The urgent and immediate need of Labour at that period, just emancipated from tyranny by the repeal of the Combination Acts, was careful education and the friendship of employers and any others who had the breadth of view and imagination to understand its powers and capabilities, and the delicacy of mind to appreciate the sturdiness and dignity of independence which already characterized its leaders.

As it was, there was never a time when separation of masters and men, and a bitter conflict of interests between Labour and the men of other classes in Industry, was more complete.

The tragedy of such a position and its effects upon the human relations in Industry are obvious. The material consequences were simply shocking.

In the Coventry Silk trade wages went down to 4*s*. and 5*s*. a week for an adult. In the Cotton industry it was worse. A return made of the earnings of Cotton Weavers in Manchester in 1838 showed an average among 4,563 individuals of two shillings and a penny per head per week. Half these people were actually living on *one penny per day for food and clothing!* Taken as a whole it was computed that not only in this district but all round Manchester, the average earnings per hour for a seventy-hours week was one penny.

The mere mention of such a condition of affairs conjures up visions of strikes and tumults everywhere. Yet so reduced were the people by their poverty and semi-starvation that they had not even the strength to use that weapon.

There was, however, a further reason, and one which brings us to the darkest feature of this time.

In all trades in this transition stage from hand-looms and "frames" in cotton and hosiery, and domestic manufacture generally, to factory and engineering shop, the worst employers and exploiters of Labour were men little above the class of the workers. The "Sweater" indeed realized the zenith of power and opulence about this time, and his brutality and meanness were indescribable. But it was in Mining and Quarrying that the lowest depths were reached. In these occupations, as in the other trades, there were the "butties" or small contractors who supplied coal or iron to large contractors at a fixed price and to make their profit ground down the workers by practices which were flagrantly dishonest. There was one thing, however, which even butties never did. They never sent women or girls down the shafts. This atrocity, for it was nothing less in those days of unprotected places and naked lights, was perpetrated by workmen themselves. They employed their own children, and other people's at the age of five and six. Even children of three and four were discovered at work—twelve hours daily, opening and shutting doors—in the dark. A boy of seven was found smoking to keep himself awake. Little girls were harnessed to trucks of coal and dragged them all day long.

The conditions under which colliers lived were, in such circumstances, worse than those of any other class of workers.

The Parliamentary Papers, when at last a full inquiry was made, "revealed a state of filth, barbarism and demoralization, which both beggars description and defies belief."

The mining population was isolated then, as now, from all other communities. The colliery proprietors were, as a rule, the worst of absentee landlords, as well as the hardest of employers. The butties, besides

cheating and sweating the people, kept public-houses of the worst and lowest description. Religion of any kind was unknown. Accidents in mines were terribly frequent and inquests significantly few.

In other industries, while the horrors of underground work were absent, insanitary housing, lack of any education, and the crushing hand of the sweater produced nearly the same effects, and in the pottery trade and all metal industries "children were brutalized by severe labour and savage treatment, and grew up into stunted, stupid and brutal men and women."

Such was the condition of the majority of the labouring people in the great and growing manufacturing districts of the North, the Midlands, Scotland and Wales from 1825 to 1850.

The fundamental cause for this was, without doubt, that in Industry—as Mr. Hovell expresses it—"Machinery superseded Men." "Employers employed no longer men but hands; no longer human beings but labour, and the relation between the two gradually developed into the payment of cash which was held to cover all the obligations of the one to the other."

We seem to have drifted from our main subject—Strikes. But it is necessary to understand the conditions to which Labour was reduced during the transition period from domestic to factory production if we are to grasp the meaning of the complete change which was taking place in the nature of the Strike weapon itself.

Until this period, as we have seen, the efforts made by organized Labour against unjust treatment, except when violence was resorted to, had mostly been the petitioning of Parliament and the invocation of the Law against encroachment of employers of the privileges granted to journeymen under old enactments. The Combination Acts modified such efforts and drove the workers to form secret brotherhoods, and carry on such organi-

zation among themselves as they dared, underground.

The repeal of the Acts enabled the Unions again to take action in the open, and enormous numbers of Trade Unions were formed, but the incidence of bad trade and the entrance of modern methods and the domestic conditions of employment we have described paralysed in most industries the powers of workers to organize themselves effectively, and stand up to employers on any kind of equal footing. So great was the demoralization and weakness of the forces of Labour at this time that the Strike weapon, though used again and again, became blunted and gradually ceased to give workers even a temporary advantage or respite from the grinding power of competition and the multitude of weapons in the hands of the masters.

There is no literature, of which we are aware, which gives the point of view of employers in regard to strikes at this time, but with the knowledge we possess of the conditions that prevailed, we may be fairly sure that most employers believed that the power of the working people, except of the most highly skilled description, to make the strike effective, was broken beyond repair.

Before the end of 1825 a strike of the Bradford Wool-Combers and Weavers resulted in the break-up of the Union. In 1826 Coal-miners and Textile Workers all over Lancashire struck fiercely and destroyed much property. The troops had to be called out and there was bloodshed. In Kidderminster in 1828 the Carpet-weavers brought the trade of the town to a standstill for some months by striking against a reduction of 17 per cent. in their wages. The Silk Weavers in London made a hard fight about the same time for the same reason. The Cotton Spinners struck for nine months at Hyde, near Manchester. All these strikes were in vain. Wages went down everywhere.

Universal failure on the part of the newly set-up

Trade Unions to win their first battles though chiefly due to a cycle of bad trade and the transitional stage reached in Industry between boyhood and manhood was by no means wholly a matter of industrial cause and effect. As we shall have occasion to point out with increasing frequency as we approach industrial conditions of the present day, social causes entered in—not by the front door, as in the case of a lower scale of wages or a great extension of the hours of work, but, as mist enters through every nook and cranny of a far from rain-proof building.

For example, the atrocities we have described in the Coal-mines—and which, reflected in cotton and other factories, brought the Factory Acts into existence and gave impulse everywhere to public reaction against the conditions of poor workpeople—would not have been possible but for the utter social separation between the labouring class and other classes.

Even Industrial writers, pure and simple, point out that the greatest enemy of Trade Unionism, and all effective efforts by workers to raise their material conditions, was lack of religious teaching and principle, or any sense of moral obligation whatever to their families, their neighbours or their country.

The conditions of all poor workers, irrespective of trade or environment, was at that time nothing less than a matter of criminal neglect of social responsibility by the classes who governed the country. Education among the poor was unheard of. Public Health Acts did not exist, and every evil practice arising out of the effete, corrupt and utterly indefensible laws and administration of Poor Law relief—the inhuman Prison system, was rampant and at its very worst.

These blots on the escutcheon of British society, however, were now becoming glaringly obvious to men of all classes, and by the reform of the Poor Laws, the

Factory Acts and the great Reform Act itself, the public showed itself at last conscious of the need of a new social conscience and social responsibility.

But though this repentance came in time to prevent a repetition of the French Revolution, it did not prevent the birth and permanent growth of revolutionary doctrines and convictions among the people who had suffered the horrors of these centuries of social neglect and the culmination after Waterloo.

The immediate consequences of these convictions were seen a few years later in the writings of Charles Hall and Karl Marx; and the Communism of Robert Owen, and finally in the Chartist agitation. The aftermath of all that the people suffered then we bear upon our shoulders to-day.

Chapter XI — *The Revolutionaries*

THERE have been writers who have tried to compare the outbreaks which began in the thirties and culminated in the Chartist rising, with the Revolution in France.

Such a comparison is futile. Not, indeed, because there are not similarities to be traced between the two movements; still less because the French Revolutionaries were for a space successful politically, while the Chartists lost every battle and were finally beaten down to a few scattered remnants of heart-broken men, but because Revolution in Great Britain was, is, and always must be as different from Revolution in France as the temperament and constitution and mental make-up of British folk differ from that of their Gallic brethren.

Yet we must not make the mistake, so easily and commonly made, that the British Revolutionary is tame and docile, in comparison with the Frenchman. On the whole, if we view the matter broadly, and consider what has been done in social changes during the past eighty or ninety years, with sufficiently intimate knowledge of cause and effect, we shall find that the British Revolutionary movement has exercised a more potent influence upon our national life than the French Socialist and Syndicalist in France, and, in a material sense, has certainly accomplished more. The British movement, moreover, is to-day consolidating its forces and gaining recruits from all classes and, in certain

respects, is more full of vitality than it has ever been before.

This we shall see as we proceed. For the moment we have to describe the position of affairs when Robert Owen and his disciples and writers of his day passionately declared that the time had come when co-operation must overcome competition, and all men, down to the very humblest, must combine to destroy root and branch the theories and principles of economic supply and demand as the basis of industrial and social life.

In a political sense, and in their immediate practical results, the teachings of those who acclaimed the natural rights of man against the prevailing system—which meant, to Communists, the rights of property and the slavery of man—bore little fruit. Even the Chartists, who, alone, attempted to carry through a crusade to the bitter end against a "bourgeois" state, were not Communists. Nor were their efforts prompted by communistic ideals. Therein lies the first and fundamental difference between the British Revolutionary from the Frenchman of 1789. There were Chartists who were out and out Communists: there were others who were Socialists of a moderate type. There were more who simply worked, and were ready to fight, against oppression, and against the system, industrial and social, which condemned all men below a certain class —to ignorance—and a life almost animal in its moral and mental degradation.

As Hovell puts it (*The Chartist Movement*, p. 32):—

> "The Chartist Movement was not a homogeneous thing. It was a general protest against industrial and political oppression, and as the protest swelled the movement swallowed up a variety of agitations of a special and local character, some of which bore little relation to socialist propagandism."

This disregard for theory, and determination to fasten

upon practical ways and means of combating the evils of the time was, of course, typically British. It has been the strength and weakness of all social agitations in this country since the earliest days. It made Owen, who, a Communist in theory, was also a man of constructive mind, a demi-god in his day. It destroyed the power of numbers of writers who denounced the present condition of the people with a force which might have inspired upheavals of any kind, had not they failed to indicate just how such upheaval could effect their object.

Dr. Charles Hall, for instance, who was a disciple of Rousseau, and whose work—*Effects of Civilization on the People in European States*—was widely read, indicted Private Property and Capital with an incisive logic which has never been surpassed by any writer of that school, and must have awakened a tremendous response among those who saw, all round them, the evils he assailed.

But his book contained no practical solution of the problem. It had no plan by which the people could, by any means whatsoever, seize the monster "Capital" by the throat and enslave it, or, at least, make it harmless. Owen, on the other hand, in his *New View of Society*, while as utterly opposed as Hall, or Rousseau himself, to the rule of Capitalism, set forth a concrete plan of action.

Owen's power, unfortunately, did not lie in any real insight into Industrial Economics. He was Utopian through and through, and calmly ignored all the inherent and, at that time, ineradicable weaknesses of the Trade Union Movement. He led his followers into a bog. But he put forward a practical ideal for which men could strive and, with belief in each other, actually attempted to achieve, and, in the end, much was really done.

His best-known proposal was a Co-operative system of production and distribution. It failed in its larger aspect to solve the problem of Capitalism. But it contained the germ of a system of combined production and distribution which is operating in Industry to-day everywhere, especially among the so-called Capitalist communities themselves.

The plan of his, however, which evoked most enthusiasm and, alas! created most bitter disappointment when it ultimately failed, was that of a National Union of Trade Unions.

It failed at the time because the moment the Government and private owners of capital began to see a movement growing which would create an enormous capitalistic interest and combine of workers only, they saw red, and conspired for its overthrow; while the workers, utterly unused to organization on the scale required, and destitute of leaders who had the requisite training and knowledge of business and high finance, were no match for their opponents.

Besides, there was no complete union even among the workers themselves. Then, as now, the highly skilled artisans, and Labour groups which were able to effectively provide themselves with a decent standard of life by the individual strength of their own Trade Unions, had no liking at all for grandiose schemes of co-operation with weaker brethren; schemes which at best would not materially benefit them personally, while if they failed, would destroy the results of all their own thrift and careful organization. Yet the wholehearted co-operation of such bodies was absolutely essential to the success of any National Union.

These artisans, however, were by no means smug and selfish individualists. They knew the facts, and read and discussed all the new theories put forward by the Socialist and Communist writers of the day. They

were not indifferent to the misery and degradation of their poorer brethren, and the desire for reformation, political, industrial and educational, was strong among them. But they saw the whole subject from a different point of view. They were largely to be found in London; and with them, and in many respects a leader among them, was Francis Place himself, now an old man and a Radical Politician.

It was in a diametrical difference as to methods for Industrial emancipation, between the various types of men in Industrial circles, and among workers themselves, and not in ideals, that Chartism and all it implied found its grave.

The Industrial working population of Great Britain at that time was divided far more widely than in these days of universal education and the rise to power of "Unskilled Labour." On the one hand there were the poor, under-paid, discontented masses in those centres where machinery had severely affected the industrial community; on the other hand, the craftsmen whose trades still enabled skill of hand and brain, and long training, to hold its own against any attempt of employers to flood the labour-market, even in bad times, with black-leg workers.

The first class, dissociated from their more powerful brethren, without education, or the opportunity of communion with any other class than their own, bitterly miserable, hopeless of help from anyone, inclined more and more toward desperate revolutionary measures. The artisans, able to afford education, and associating with many men of other classes, with ambitions to raise themselves and their class to higher levels, but, reflecting upon the futility of class-war, contented themselves with Politics of a moderate character.

Then, in 1832, arose another factor, which turned the scale. This was the Reform movement of the Middle Classes.

The fate of Chartism might have been very different had not the middle classes, with Lord Shaftesbury and his disciples, forced the Government to inquire into Industrial conditions and ultimately to carry through the Factory Acts, the Reform of the Poor Law, and the Reform Bill.

The fact was—a fact which industrial writers, describing this period, are apt to ignore—the whole of the community, including the "propertied classes," was in a seething state of unrest during the twenty-five years following Waterloo.

The Nation knows to-day, to its cost, what the aftermath of war means financially to every class.

In the thirties of the nineteenth century it was in some senses worse even than it is now. The volume of the direct cost of the Napoleonic wars was nothing, of course, in comparison with that of 1914–18, but the abuses created before the repeal of the old Poor Law; the Agrarian policy of the Corn Laws; mismanagement and corruption in the Civil Service of that day, and numberless instances of maladministration, waste and favouritism, in the expenditure of Public Funds, caused rates and taxes to rise beyond all endurance. No doubt there were men in trade who had made fortunes, as there are to-day; and the cruelty, injustice and inhuman neglect of the mass of unskilled labour by their employers of that time is still a byword and a reproach to Industry which will never be forgotten.

But Labour, with all its woes, did not stand alone as an injured class. Therefore, in describing this period as revolutionary—which it undoubtedly was—we must use the term in a very wide sense.

The workmen formed their "Grand National Consolidated Trades Union" inspired by Robert Owen's theory that—as he confessed himself—"National arrangements shall be made to include all the working classes in the

great organization—all industrial competition is to cease—all manufactures are to be carried on by National Companies (of workers)."

When this proved abortive, and other attempts of a like nature only resulted in prosecution and oppression from employers, supported by Government, there were strikes and tumults in every great trade, and, among the worst paid, violence and bloodshed stained the annals of Trade Unionism very deeply. Finally, in 1839, and for some years, the "Charter" was the rallying cry of all sections of workers whose unions had been broken up; whose wages, even though trade was good, had been lowered, and who saw no hope of salvation, industrially or socially, except by a complete turnover of the political system of the country. The "Charter" contained six points:—

(1) Suffrage for every adult male person, without qualifications—except three months' residence; (2) Voting by Ballot; (3) The Country to be divided into three hundred constituencies, on the basis of the last Census, and re-arranged after each following Census; (4) Annual Parliaments; (5) No property qualification for election to Parliament; (6) Members of Parliament to be paid.

How strangely the "Charter" reads to us as a red banner of revolution now that most of its "points" have become part of the constitution.

But at the time the conditions of life were such, and the separation of classes so bitter, that the working men who, literally in millions when the agitation spread, swore to the "Charter," believed such political reforms would give them a new earth. It would, they thought, destroy at a blow the power of the propertied classes to hold them down in misery and penury, which they believed every one—including all professional and trading people—had combined to do at that time.

Most bitter of all was the labour agitation in 1834 against the Reform of the Poor Laws.

This agitation, more than any other manifestations of the day, discloses the canker of mutual distrust which was eating the heart out of decent social relations between classes at that time.

There are no two opinions to-day as to the absolute necessity of a drastic change in the whole system of law and administration of public relief to destitute persons as it existed previous to 1834. The provisions of the old law, which enabled out-relief in money to be given in supplementation of wages, had become simply iniquitous in their results. Young couples in agricultural districts who wanted to marry would do so on nothing at all, and apply, soon after the ceremony, to the Relieving Officer for maintenance. Wages were reduced in country districts to a mere pittance, the farmer arranging that the labourer should get so much from the rates.

As each district in those days was entirely autonomous, and no Central Department governed expenditure, the worst kind of corruption, tyranny and abuse crept in.

As a consequence, idle, dissolute and unscrupulous persons in all classes, whether giving or receiving public relief, grew fat, and the independent and honourable members of the public were systematically plundered.

The facts were so patent that, in spite of the resistance of every kind of vested interest, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 was passed by Parliament, with very little opposition.

The Act, of course, was directed, firstly, to making the lot of anyone receiving public relief less eligible than those who kept themselves; secondly, to preventing, by central control, the abuses of locally elected bodies of "Guardians of the Poor." Out-Relief was only to be given in special cases; "Workhouses"

were established for the chronic pauper and the destitute able-bodied.

Logically, and having regard to the weakness of average human nature and the abuses of the past, these provisions were amply justified; and, indeed, if the old Law had not been changed and afterwards honestly administered, in spite of all outcry and agitation against it, the country would have had to face bankruptcy, not only financial but in any self-dependence among the majority of the poorest classes.

But, of all reforms, none has caused more sense of injustice and antagonism, or has bred, in succeeding years, in all sections of working people, more hatred towards other classes, or fostered the spirit which creates the "Strike," socially and industrially, more than this really beneficent Act.

In the reason for this lies, we believe, the explanation of most of the industrial difficulties and all the acute social unrest from which we have suffered since that time and which to-day, after the Great War, is occupying the minds of thoughtful people of every class, and, most seriously of all, those who are responsible for the government of the country.

The reformers of the Poor Law, the men responsible for the Factory Acts themselves, and for all legislation, industrial and social, of that day, were inspired, on the whole, by noble motives, and a detestation of injustice to any class. They were enemies of vested interests of all kinds; they felt intense sympathy with the poor, and equally intense antipathy to the profiteer-exploiter of Labour. They held themselves to be champions of the very masses who, when they felt the results of the Reforms, rose up and cursed their benefactors, as they had never cursed their employers.

The reason of all this misunderstanding is plain enough to any social historian.

The Reformers were completely out of all personal touch of the masses of the people; they legislated for their benefit without taking the least trouble or concern to make them understand the position, or give them any choice in the matter. In a word, the social reformers treated the working class as the employers had treated Labour when it became necessary, in their own judgment, to introduce machinery into manufacture, and to revolutionize the conditions of industrial employment.

In saying this, we cast no blame on the Commissioners of the Poor Law, or the middle-class public which supported them. They were all victims of an evil environment of class separation and isolation. The men they should properly have taken counsel with were not get-at-able by any ordinary means. We talk freely about the class-consciousness of the present-day extremist. It is sweet kindliness compared with the attitude toward the rest of the community of the rank-and-file workmen in Potteries, Steelworks, Cotton-mills and Coal-mines of 1832.

Brutalized by his utter lack of education, the hardships of his hand-to-mouth existence, the overcrowding and insanitation of his dwelling-place, the petty oppression and hard-dealing of his immediate superiors in his daily work-life, the British workman of that day, of the lower class, was a very difficult person indeed to approach. If we grant, as we must, that his disposition and character were the result, largely, of bad treatment and utter callous neglect by those who used him to make their living, or to build up their own fortune and estate, we have still to remember that no avenue existed by which the Radical Reformer searching for truth, determined to cut away at once abuses strangling trade, and the conditions of life of their own class, could get access as far as he knew to the minds and the brains and the point of view of the poor labourer.

Perhaps he did not try as hard as he should have done. His own mind was full of political views of his own, apart from social reformation of the workers, and his Political Reform programme was not that of the Charter by any manner of means. He had a practical and honest mind, but the human side of Industry was a closed book still to him.

There developed, in consequence, a complete and most tragic breach and antagonism between the "Reformists"—to borrow the term used in later years in France—and the "Revolutionaire." The rude Masses were led by agitators who, apart from Owen and others, were not wholly sincere in anything but their own advancement and notoriety; and these fell upon the advocates of free-trade tooth and nail—the men who had battled for the Factory Acts and saved the lives of innumerable working women and children and who, by the Reform of the Poor Law, gave freedom and power to Trade Unions to insist upon better remuneration for Labour. The Reformers, in their turn, shocked and resentful at the violent, destructive rebellion against their efforts to get cheap bread and to raise working people from paupers to independent citizenship, sided more and more, as Chartism grew, with the employers' and land-owners' interests.

They were joined, as has already been seen, by the intelligent artisan class.

The Trade Unions, as a whole, drew steadily away from any connexion with the People's Movement, with which they had never been closely associated, and the ten years following the first great effort of the middle classes to remove the worst features of Industrial life for workers, were years of the bitterest class warfare ever known. They ended with the total failure and final extinction of the Labourers' effort to emancipate themselves from the rule of their masters and establish the Co-operative

Commonwealth so gloriously described by Robert Owen, so implicitly believed in by his disciples, and which, for a time, had been the promised land to workers in every part of the country.

THE Revolution failed. The Reformed Poor Laws were established in spite of all opposition. Cobden and Bright became, in the fifties, the heroes of the Industrial leaders everywhere, as trade improved and the price of food went down. Chartism, after being the nightmare of respectable people for a generation, was crushed. The leaders were imprisoned, and many were punished with all the vigour of a severe and merciless penal code.

In the eyes of any earnest believer in Owen's great schemes—and there were many of these still faithful to their old ideals—the whole structure of the hopes built up by the support of eager hundreds of thousands of workers, had fallen to the ground. They believed that a greedy plutocracy and a tyrannous, inhuman aristocracy had triumphed, and that the poor were doomed to industrial and social slavery, and, if not to actual starvation, in most cases, at least, to enter the detested workhouse.

These views, variously expressed, were held by many acute thinkers, who had steeped themselves in Owenism and in the convictions current among Socialists and Communists. A moderate edition, as regards the Poor Law, was given by Holyoake, the great Co-operator, who wrote long afterwards :—

" People now are prone to look upon the stormy and infuriate opposition to the Poor Law as based upon mere ignorance. . . .

It was not ignorance, it was justifiable indignation with which the Poor Law scheme was regarded. Now, the mass of the people do not expect to go to the Workhouse and do not intend to go there. But during the first forty years of this century almost every workman and every labourer expected to go there sooner or later. Thus the hatred of the Poor Law was well founded. Its dreary punishment would fall, it was believed, not upon the idle merely, but upon the working people who by no thrift could save, nor by any industry provide for the future."

These fears were not realized. It was the old system, by which the miserable pittance of an agricultural labourer or a hand-loom weaver was supplemented by a dole from the public purse, controlled in each area by Guardians who were often the worst offenders in sweating, which lowered the *morale* and crushed the manhood out of the poorest workers.

The workhouse, in those days, was often enough a brutal alternative, and great were the sufferings endured by people to avoid it. But the fear of it and the very intensity of the need to secure a better living from their labour, braced the workers to a union of forces which, after much violence and tumult, began at last to exact a living wage from their employers.

No law which strikes into the heart of a complicated human social problem, however, can fail to do injury. The Poor Law of 1834 was no exception. But the real evil which it fostered and augmented, was not unjust material treatment to the poor, but the creation of violent resentment and despair among millions who hailed the People's Charter as the birthright of every self-respecting man. The whole of the lesson the promoters and administrators of the Poor Laws sought to teach—that independence of State-aid was the goal for which all self-respecting people should strive, sowed seed not only unable to yield good fruit, but from which sprang fresh swords and spears of hate and class-estrangement.

The failure of Chartism was not the triumph of the

Middle Class and the community at large, as the labourers bitterly believed. It was not the end of Revolution in this country. On the contrary, it was in a very real sense the foundation of Revolution, but Revolution which worked slowly, almost unseen at the time and for generations afterwards.

The upheaval of thought and the new conception of society which the Chartists created in the hearts of humble folk, whose minds, before that day, had been narrowed to their own local and individual needs and conditions of life, was in no sense crushed with the fall of their leaders. The will to strike was as strong as ever, and the determination to wrest by force from an employer a reasonable standard of life—no matter what might happen to economic laws of supply and demand—was as dour as ever. The only difference was that this bitterness now extended to the rest of the community.

The reasoning of the poor of that day, and since, was that of a "National Association for the Protection of Labour" formed in 1830, described by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb (*History of Trade Unionism*, p. 120) :—

> "How is it," said the Association, "that whilst everything else increases—knowledge, wealth, civil and religious liberty, churches, madhouses and prisons—the circumstances of the working man become ever worse? He, the sole producer of food and raiment is, it appears, destined to sink whilst others rise."

The case of the people is put in a nutshell here. Labour *alone*, they believed, produced everything, and, by right, should possess everything. Instead, while they had next to nothing, the non-productive "classes" possessed more and more. The "Charter," they believed, would have redressed the balance at once, give them Manhood Suffrage, Abolition of Plural Voting, etc., and they would do the rest, and quite peaceably.

We may wonder at any human beings being such simpletons. But we have yet to see whether we have learnt the lesson which the Chartists had to teach.

This lesson was that these legions of poor, uneducated folk—even rough and brutal in many cases—were capable of believing in wholly, and striving, and paying for with all they had, a political ideal of pure democracy. We shall do well to note that no word was said by these Revolutionaries about revenge against the classes they believed to be greedy oppressors. They abused them without stint, and laid to their charge, largely because of the Poor Law Reforms, motives of the worst character, but they never cherished any scheme of putting them under ban. The reason was twofold. Firstly, it was Freedom, not Revenge, the people coveted; secondly, their leading speakers, and the men worshipped by them as their saviours taking them to the Promised Land were, in many instances, members of other classes, and made no secret of it at all. The part played by the Middle Classes, on the other hand, when examined impartially, though honest and even courageous in its way, lacked all touch of imagination or sympathy with democracy at that time. Lord Shaftesbury was a great and large-hearted man, but he was, at heart, as autocratic as Lord Londonderry, who, to crush a strike of coal-miners in 1844, announced publicly in the Press —after warning all tradesmen in the town of Seaham that he would ruin them if they gave credit or food to miners on strike—that :—

> " It is neither fair, just nor equitable that the resident traders in his (Lord Londonderry's) own town should combine and assist the infatuated workmen and pitmen . . . in an unjust and senseless warfare against their *proprietors and masters*."

The italics are ours. They are significant of much, especially as there is no evidence that Lord London-

derry was by nature or intentions a harsh or cruel man. But it was his point of view that his workmen were his property.

When we come to humbler people, it was just the same. Chadwick and the Poor Law Commissioners, and the Boards of Guardians. The Farmers and Gentry, Employers and Tradesmen—the majority, after the Act had passed, who served on Boards when there were no "pickings" left for its administrative bodies —were excellent men, who incurred obliquy, and even danger to life and limb, to do their duty without pay. Do we find them less autocratic? Not a bit. The old Poor Law had demoralized the poor. Guardians felt it was the business, not of the poor themselves, but of the other classes, to teach the poor to be independent. The idea that the working folk themselves might have some views on the subject, or even that they had any right to views, is not apparent in any Blue-Book published on the subject, nor in the writings of any Poor-Law Reformer.

It was in the conflict, absolute and unbridged, between the ideals of Labour and those of the men who held responsibility in government, Municipal or Parliamentary, which was the tragedy of that day, and which laid the foundation for intensified class-separation and a new revolution by and by, and which is with us now.

The lot of the poor, by common consent, was miserable in the extreme, and trade being bad in the years following the Chartist rising, the suffering of unskilled labour passes all description. Again and again there were strikes, stubbornly fought, endured with infinite patience, and, at the end, wholly defeated.

The meaning of these Strikes was seldom, if ever, understood by the public. It was held that workmen, no matter what they suffered, nor how completely they were flouted by employers when they pressed for Arbitration, must on no account hold up services which

interfered with public convenience. This was natural, because the public, in those days, did not feel any responsibility whatever for the conditions under which any man had to work. That was his business only. The workmen, for their part, cared equally little for the welfare of the Public.

The result was an increasing lack of sympathy and understanding between the poor and the rest of the community, after Chartism had spent its force. On the part of Reformers, who now began to feel that Sanitation and Public Health was a matter of National concern, there was no tendency at that time to educate persons living in insanitary areas to understand the laws of health and voluntarily obey them. They must be coerced to better things. That was the only way.

In these circumstances there was only one avenue by which Labour in general, apart from a few privileged trades, and strong men among artisans of individualistic political views, could ever hope to gain sufficient power to provide working men with a decent standard of life. Labour had to show that within itself it possessed the qualities of business management and the capacity for building up quietly and without agitation, and, particularly, without strikes—except for special reasons—a great organization of Trade Unionism, in the purest sense of the term.

Revolution by organized crowds having failed dismally, disputes with employers leading to down-tools or lock-outs proving equally disastrous, the alternatives which stared workmen in the face were either for each man to work for what he could get for himself, or for all to impose a discipline and a self-restraint at great self-sacrifice upon each other by associating to demand weekly contributions of money from every one in a trade, for which no adequate return could be given to the contributor for years, if at all.

The workers, to their eternal credit, chose the latter alternative, and from 1842 there began a movement among all classes of labour to form Trade Unions for constructive purposes, and not merely to provide funds out of which strike allowances could be paid when a deadlock was reached with the masters.

The first symptom of this awakening to hard facts was a shrewd appreciation of the need of fighting their battles with weapons other than a strike or a crowbar, or with flint and steel to destroy or burn out the property of the owners.

The Miners led the way by engaging a competent lawyer, and paying him the, then, very large salary of £1,000 a year. The autobiography of this man would be worth reading by all students of Industrial history, if he had written a frank account of his experiences from both points of view. As it is, in a letter to the Flint-glass Makers' Society, quoted by Mr. and Mrs. Webb (*History of Trade Unionism*, p. 183), he throws light upon the peculiar social prejudices of the day. He is describing his difficulties in presenting the case of workmen before the Courts :—

"There are indeed men on the Bench who are honest enough, and desirous of doing their duty. But all their tendencies and circumstances are against you. They listen to your opponents not only often, but cheerfully, so they know more fully the case against you than in your favour. To you they listen, too, but in a sort of temper of 'Prisoner at the Bar, you are entitled to make any statement you think fit, and the Court is bound to hear you; but mind, whatever you say—etc.' In the one case you observe the hearty smile of goodwill; in the other, the derisive sneer, though sometimes with a ghastly sort of kindliness in it. . . . It never happened to me to meet a Magistrate who considered that an agreement among masters not to employ any particular 'troublesome fellow' was an unlawful act; reverse the case, however, and it immediately becomes a formidable conspiracy which must be put down with the strong arm of the law."

It is to be remembered, of course, on the other side, that the great violence of language often used by Labour leaders at that time was bound to warp the feelings of a magistrate against the class, when as we know was the case, he had very little opportunity, as a rule, to know personally any labouring man beyond his own servants, whom he would look upon as members of his family. He would not have been human if he had been unprejudiced at heart.

The next sign of a new spirit in Labour was their attempt to form, in 1845, a "National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Labour." The idea of such an association had been, as we remember, one of Owen's favourite schemes. But he planned to make such a body supersede all capitalistic organizations, and combine every manual worker so as to enable him, as a class, to control the finance and direction of Industry in his own interests.

The National Association of 1845 was only "to protect the interests and promote the well-being of the associated trades" by mediation, arbitration and legal proceeding, and by promoting "all measures, political and social and educational, which are intended to improve the condition of the labouring classes."

The men who were behind the movement were in no sense Communists; still less were they Revolutionaries. They were indeed described by Mr. and Mrs. Webb, somewhat acidly, as sending out a Report which was "the first manifestation of that spirit of cautious, if somewhat limited, statesmanship which characterized the Trade Union Leaders of the next thirty years."

So far removed were the pioneers of this new movement from the disciples of Owenism, that they declared they were "deeply impressed with the importance of, and beneficial tendency arising from, a good understanding between the Employer and the Employed,

seeing that their interests are mutual, and that neither can injure the other without the wrong perpetrated recoiling upon the party which inflicts it."

The Committee even specifically suggested that "it be one of the principal objects of this Conference to cultivate a good understanding with the Employer, and thereby remove the prejudices which exist against trade Combinations, by showing upon all occasions that they only seek by combination to place themselves on equal terms as disposers of their labour with those who purchase it; to secure themselves from injury, but by no means to inflict it upon others."

Strikes were discouraged, and conciliation and arbitration in regard to all matters affecting employment and employers were main planks in the movement.

It did not, however, grow into a permanent organization. With the usual bluntness of expression one large Trade Union, the Stone Masons' Society, expressing the views of others, refused all connexion with the Association by saying—"past experience has taught us that we have had general union enough."

The fact was the Trade Unions then existing, though in agreement in theory with the views of the promoters of the Association as to the undesirability of Strikes, were not at all ready to be controlled in the matter; yet, at the same time, when they did strike, they came to the Association for support, and were very angry when help was not given.

In 1849 a Strike took place of the Wolverhampton Tinplate Workers. The Association was involved in it, and in prolonged legal proceedings afterwards lost most of its money and all its credit. The Association lingered on for a few years, but never exercised important influence or function in the Trade Union Movement.

The Association, however, though it could not realize its principal objects of a "General Council of Labour" with

definite powers to combine Trade Unions for productive and other purposes, left its mark, and is of profound interest to those who see in the established consolidation of methods of conciliation and arbitration the paths to prosperity of Industrial Workers as well as to Industry itself.

It was the first body of workmen to endeavour to create means to this end. The leaders were well-educated, business-like, and of a mental capacity which disproved effectually that general notion that working men, from the intellectual point of view, were inferior persons.

Its President, indeed, Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, was not a workman. He is described as "an accomplished man of the world, with the habits of a dandy." He was also an experienced politician. But that a rich man should devote himself, as a comrade and fellow-officer with workmen, to the interests of their class and work on equal terms with them for many years, is itself the best evidence of their mental calibre and of the beginning of better things. In saying this, we should not fail to recognize the influence of Chartism itself—with all its faults—in this direction.

In a very real sense indeed Chartism was the foundation for a peaceful revolution, which was destined to permeate our social life in days to come.

Its historian, Hovell, truly says :—

"Chartism marks a real new departure in our social and political history. It was the first movement of modern times which was engineered and controlled by working men. Even its failures had their educational value. Its modest successes taught elementary lessons of self-discipline and self-government which made the slow development of British Democracy possible without danger to national stability and well-being. . . . It helped to break down the iron walls of class-separation, and showed the terrible working man was not very different from the governing classes when the time came for him to exercise direct power."

Chapter XIII *Education*

THE "terrible working man" in 1849 made up his mind when he saw what happened as a result of the Chartist Movement that he was not going to try conclusions again either with Employers or with Parliament until he was fully equipped for the struggle. He perceived clearly that neither political freedom nor industrial security could be won by mere numbers. His people must be educated and organized. He must acquire habits of self-restraint. His language in negotiation must accord, he felt, with the standards of ordinary King's English, not the gutter. In short, he must, in homely phrase, show that he was as good as other people—and a little better. This he proceeded to do.

"We see rising up in the Unions of the better-paid Artisans," write Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, "a keen desire to get at the facts of their industrial and social conditions. Instead of rhetorical abuse of all Employers as 'the unproductive class,' and total abstinence from investigation of the details of disputes, we find the Compositors"—who, as a Union, led the way in this matter—"dealing only with concrete instances of hardship, and referring every important question to a 'Select Committee' for inquiry and report."

The London Consolidated Society of Bookbinders established a Library; so did the London Society of Compositors. The Journeymen Steam Engine and Machine Makers' Friendly Society formed a Mutual

Improvement class at Manchester. The Stone Masons —a much rougher class—went one better in Scotland. They not only formed their class, but an Association "for moral, physical and intellectual improvement." A question which this Association took up and investigated—and which shows the inquiring and intelligent mind of the members—was: "Is the present improved condition of machinery beneficial to the working classes, or is it hurtful?" Up to that time there were few workmen who would have thought it worth while even to ask the question.

"Trade Journals" began to appear. The United Branches of the Operative Potters started a weekly newspaper in 1843—*The Potters' Examiner.* It was no "rag," this periodical. It dealt with technical processes of the industry, as well as with other "trade interests."

The Steam Engine Makers issued a *Mechanic's Magazine* for several years between 1841–1847. A more important paper still was the *Bookbinders' Trade Circular,* which, from being a little organ of the London Bookbinders' Society, became a magazine containing information on all matters concerning books and their manufacture. The most ambitious and permanent journal of all, which exists to-day, was the *Flint-glass Makers' Magazine,* a monthly of ninety-six pages. It was established by the Flint-glass Makers' Trade Union, and its stated object was expressed as follows: "The Education of every man in our Trade, beginning at the oldest and coming down to the youngest."

The advice given in the early numbers of the Magazine in 1850 was the motto of the leading Labour men of that time, and the burden of all exhortations to the younger generation:—

"If you do not wish to stand as you are and suffer more oppression, we say to you—Get Knowledge, and in getting knowledge

you get power. . . . Let us earnestly advise you to educate ; get intelligence instead of alcohol—it is sweeter and more lasting."

These years from 1850 onwards were years of a new Industrial revolution, preached and practised by the intelligent and progressive Trade Unions ; none the less a revolution because it was waged with pen and by word of mouth, and aimed at peace, not war. It was a revolution of educated workmen against the uneducated mass on the one hand, and against "oppression" by Employers, equally uneducated, on the other hand.

To the uneducated and unorganized worker—who, we must remember, was then to be numbered almost by the million, while the artisans who established or read these journals did not exceed, at the most, one hundred thousand—these new revolutionaries of Industrial Labour said, in the words of a Committee of the London Compositors early in 1835 :—

"Unfortunately almost all Trade Unions hitherto formed have relied for success upon secret oaths and physical force. . . . The fault and the destruction of all Trade Unions has hitherto been that they have copied the vices which they professed to condemn. While disunited and powerless they have stigmatized their employers as grasping taskmasters, but as soon as they (the workers) were united and powerful, then they became tyrants in their turn, and unreasonably endeavoured to exact more than the nature of their employment demanded, or than their employers could afford to give. . . . Let the Compositors of London show the Artisans of England a brighter and better example ; and casting away the aid to be derived from cunning and brute strength let us, when we contend with our opponents, employ only the irresistible weapons of truth and reason."

The Stone Masons were more direct still.

"Keep from striking," they urged, "as you would from a ferocious animal that you knew would destroy you. . . . We implore you, brethren, as you value your own existence, to avoid in every way possible these useless strikes. Let us have another

year of earnest and attentive organization, and if that does not perfect us, we must have another ; for it is a knowledge of the disorganized state of working men generally that stimulates the tyrant and the taskmaster to oppress them."

One Union, the "Flint-glass Makers'," abolished Strike Allowances altogether in 1854.

But there was an alternative. A bad employer was to be defeated by the withdrawal of men from his works, one by one, situations being found for them elsewhere.

The men who decided upon the new revolutionary policy of preventing Strikes and discouraging all hot and violent outbursts of workmen were those in command of the Central Organizations of Trade Unions. Naturally they advocated, and, through the strength of their personality—and ill-success of the methods they disapproved—they carried into effect, centralization of power and authority in a Central Executive. Branches must not take Strike or other action against Employers on their own account. All negotiations with Employers were to be carried out, on behalf of artisans, by the Central Executive of their own Unions.

It was a change in policy, with vast possibilities for good or evil. It promised a new era and a new future for Industry. Its immediate success, however, depended upon three things. The first, that the actual demands made upon Employers in a trade by the Central Authority of the Union were just and acceptable ; the second, that Employers would appreciate the importance of taking all possible steps to strengthen and encourage the authority of the men who led the "revolution" ; the third, that in spite of central control of a few leaders, the "new spirit" would be appreciated and understood by the rank and file of Labour in the Unions, and from them spread to Labour generally, whether organized or not.

A right solution of the first and second problems

was the most important matter. Given a general agreement with Employers upon principles of Industrial negotiation, and successful achievement, thereby, of better conditions for workers on the one hand, coupled with satisfactory proof to manufacturers that their interests were respected by the authorities of Trade Unions, the way would be open to a new relationship altogether between Employers and Employed. And though, in the first instance, such relationship on the workers' side would have been confined to the highest class of workmen, yet, given the right spirit on both sides, it must, of necessity, spread downwards both among Employers of unskilled labour and the labouring classes, and the leaven of good-will at the top at last permeate the mass.

This did not happen. The Trade Union leaders, though excellent men of affairs, and fully alive, as we have seen, to the folly of violent means for assertion of their claims, had not broad views upon Industrial Economics. They took their stand upon the narrow platform of supply and demand as enunciated by certain economists, and advocated in season and out of season by a section of the Employing class itself. They reasoned that if one hundred men were required in a trade, and only seventy-five were available, wages would be increased proportionately; whereas if there were one hundred and twenty-five men available, wages would go down. In other words, they considered demand for labour to be static and limited, and only to be met, in the workmen's interests, by an equally static and limited supply. Therefore they demanded limitation of apprentices and abolition of overtime.

In these days, when men on all sides agree that it is to the vital interest of Labour, as of Employers, that, given proper guarantees against the cutting of piece-rates and unemployment arising from glutted markets,

there should be maximum production all round, the policy of the intelligent artisan of the fifties will appear very crude indeed, especially as it had been tried for more than a hundred years and had almost invariably failed through the constant introduction of machinery into Industrial processes, and the corresponding inflow of unskilled labour carrying out with the machine work that which formerly could only be executed by skilled craftsmen.

But we must recollect two facts if we are to judge the issue fairly. In the first place, Industry had not then learned that the free-trade principle in production and distribution of manufactures was, in the long run, the right one from a business point of view. Manufacturers and merchants and most commercial men of that day still believed—though with notable exceptions, which were rapidly increasing in numbers—that British trade could flourish upon limited supply of good articles at high prices, and that high profits were better than large sales. The Corn Laws had been repealed, it is true, and the fiscal policy of Britain entirely changed. But its effect had not been sufficiently felt to cause the bulk of Industrial men to grasp the possibilities of augmenting demand by increasing supplies at a lower price. And where the consciousness of this reversal of old ideas was forming it took the shape of a belief that low wages and long hours for Labour was an economic necessity. This belief, alas ! is to be found among more than one powerful group of Employers to-day.

The inevitable effect upon Labour, in the fifties, of the old supply and demand theory among Employers, was a resolve to bring it into practice on their side.

But another motive lay at the bottom of their action —the bitter experience of many generations that unless the Worker developed strength to resist Employers, he was doomed, whatever happened, to lose by any

improvements in machinery, and any development of trade.

The Worker who looked back with knowledge—as these artisans did—over the history of Industry for the past century and more, saw one thing only—that, in all circumstances, Employers as a class had taken the lion's share of any advantages which accrued by increased business and supply of goods and foreign markets. The place of the Worker who produced those goods only improved if he were able by combination and the strength of his position as a seller of a commodity required by Employers, e.g., his skill and usefulness, to force the market in his favour.

The spirit and desire of the artisan of the fifties was to demand his price by fair arguments and peaceable measures. He would appeal to justice, not to force, but he felt, as much as the Chartists had felt, that he was faced with a hard wall of opposition. His task was not to convince men of good-will that his cause was just, but it was to force an opponent by organization ; by cogent argument and logic ; and by possessing, himself, the power of the purse and so withdrawing his labour if need be to come to terms.

Employers would not, and indeed could not, grant the terms Labour asked—restriction of apprentices and abolition of overtime. They were faced with the hard fact that, owing to free-trade and the increasing competition in other countries, they must produce, and produce in ever-increasing volume, at the lowest possible figure. Thus there was a complete clash of interests between the two sides, aggravated by the efforts of firms in certain trades (and these firms some of the largest in the country) to force the very maximum they could out of men, regardless of all social and physical consequences.

The first great fight between the big Unions, which

had been accumulating funds and had been strengthening their position quietly for years past, and the Employers, took place in 1852 in the Engineering industry.

The men were determined to put an end to piece-work and systematic overtime. The Employers said that at the first strike entered into by any men employed by an engineering firm, there would be a general lock-out throughout the whole trade. Arbitration was suggested by the men and refused by the Employers. Members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers then refused to work overtime and immediately the lock-out began.

The struggle lasted three months. At the end of this time the Masters won and the men returned to work on their Employers' terms. The rapidly extending industry could not be carried on under the conditions of 1852 without overtime and piece rates. The men had taken up an impossible attitude. Their victory would have disorganized their industry in a way which must have done them as much harm as their employers. But the success of the Masters, in certain respects, was a very expensive victory indeed.

The whole affair was canvassed by the public, and, not for the first time, the men received a good deal of sympathy and support. Lord Goderich, afterwards Marquis of Ripon, gave £500 to Strike funds and his example was followed; £4,000 was contributed, apart from the Strike Pay available, and £5,000 from other Trade Unions. £43,000 was expended altogether. More significant still were the efforts of many middle-class men who took the matter up in the Press, lectured publicly, and endorsed the men's position from the purely humanitarian point of view.

All this was largely because the Employers made the cardinal blunder of insisting not only that the men should return to work upon the old terms, but that they must sign an agreement forswearing Trade Union

membership. That intelligent men of business, most of whom were of the highest character, many occupying positions as Magistrates and other public offices, could make such a mistake is almost incredible nowadays, when Employers, mostly speaking, believe in sober Trade Unionism.

That it was made, and against a Union which had not committed violence or even threatened it, shows how hopelessly estranged and divided were Labour leaders from the Employers; and how entirely the latter misconceived the calibre and the nature of Trade Union men in authority at that time. The attitude of Employers was little changed, really, from that of their ancestors of the eighteenth century. Labour's duty was to obey. They, the Employers, alone knew what was best and requisite in regard to conditions of work and its fair remuneration. Injustice, they admitted, there might be, on the part of individual firms; but in the main it was not happening. In any event, for common working men to set themselves up to teach their masters their business—which business was clearly to control Labour—was a species of gross impertinence not to be described in printable language. The argument used by such men as Lord Goderich—that the system of overtime and piece-rates as then in practice was destroying all social life for workers, and reducing them to wearied beasts of burden—was scoffed at. The argument, very likely, was overdone in many cases. But the real fact was that the Employer, now divorced from close contact with Workers in their homes or as anything but "hands" in the Works, was supremely ignorant of the subject, and therefore wholly indifferent to the humanitarian side of industrial life.

This was not the case, of course, in firms—which still existed in considerable numbers—where the partners or directors took up a paternal attitude towards their

men. But, in the first place, such firms did not make any effort to bring other employers, as a whole, to their way of thinking and acting; and, in the second place, paternal solicitude on the old-fashioned plan was not what an educated workman wanted. He required sympathy, fair dealing, but, above all, insight into his point of view from his Employer.

As in former times, while sympathy was given individually by Employers in much larger numbers than we know, and a still greater number endeavoured to act fairly by their men, there were none—or so negligible in number as not to count at all—who conceived any need for the training of workmen in the economics of Industry; or in any way except in so far as might be necessary to make them better workmen. They were to labour, not to reason. Education was for the middle and upper classes only.

We cannot find the least conception on the part of the masters of Industry that what their men needed most to make them efficient aids in the struggle against competitors at home and abroad, was a responsibility and the feeling of partnership in regard to the business of the man who had secured their services. Many an Employer, even then, knew how to train his men to skill of hand and brain over use of machinery and craftsmanship. Some took care that such skill should have financial reward, but none saw that a human, not financial, interest in the workmen's side in the whole of the Employer's undertaking and in Industry generally, would do more for the prosperity of British trade than any amount of overtime and low piece-rates, even as a matter of mere money gain.

It was the opportunity of the Employers, now that the spirit of moderation and common sense had brought good men to the fore-front of Trade Unionism, but this opportunity was lost. Conservatism and indifer-

ence to the social outlook of workmen was too strongly entrenched in the Employers of that day.

It was hardly to be wondered at, for the upbringing of Commercial men of that time, even where their fathers were men of established position, was in as narrow a groove as that of the Workers themselves. They moved in a world of their own.

So the breach was never healed between master and man, and all the brain-power and development of sober organization on the part of Industrial workers resulted in greater strength of opposition to them by Employers, and bids fair to further undermine the mutual confidence on both sides.

The education of the men, however, was proceeding apace. The Trade Unions were placed by their leaders on a firm financial foundation, and accumulated very large funds. This needed, and produced, officials able to understand finance, to set up a wide-spread business organization, and, most difficult of all, to control men and to administer national affairs. Plain working men were these officials, but remarkably efficient and well-educated, though not on a University plan.

This education, and its results, however, did not pass unnoticed. Such men as "Tom" Hughes, Professor Beasley and Frederick Harrison not only became supporters of Trade Unionism. They sought and valued the friendship of the leaders. Through such companionship Trade Unionists became personally known to leading men in public life, and, finally, to the general public. These sympathisers with Trade Union aspirations gave of their best to the movement, as Francis Place had done twenty-five years before; but it was in a wholly different way. Pedagogism was not dreamed of. Comradeship and equality of friendship were the key-note of it all.

As a result, the position of Labour in the country

now began to undergo a remarkable change. Workmen wrote Articles in periodicals as well as in the daily press. The principles and ideals of Trade Unions began to strike men of all classes as having much to be said for them. Labour men generally ceased to be viewed by most people as a mob of dangerous demagogues. The younger generation of University men began to study the ethics of co-operation in production. Robert Owen's works were read and discussed. The combination of workers for their social and educational advancement was generally approved. The new Liberal party in Parliament warmly supported the idea, to the indignation of its Industrial magnates. For, tragically blind to the writing on the wall, the majority of the captains of Industry continued to meet this incoming tide of democratic progress with stubborn and unequivocal disapproval.

They shrewdly perceived that these quiet-mannered, sober Trade Union leaders were striving with all their souls for Labour to secure a larger share of the profits of Industry—in other words, at the expense of the Merchant or Manufacturer, or both. They honestly believed that such endeavours, if successful, must ruin not only trade, but the country, because they thought it would mean control of the ignorant over the wise.

Therefore, as Trade Unions increased in wealth and their officials in intelligence and grasp of affairs and in reputation with other classes, the more did Employers determine that, come what would, they must break and utterly destroy the power of such organization, which, in their eyes, had now become a monstrous growth—a menace to all social order and the stability of national life.

Chapter XIV — *The New Weapon*

THE Strike and Lock-out of the Engineers in 1852 was the first battle fought out between a Trade Union armed with funds, led by intelligent and experienced men, and holding the sympathy of a considerable portion of the public—and Employers who were thoroughly aroused to the dangers of this new development in Labour organization. The Masters, we have seen, won. They were even able to force the bulk of their men to sign the famous declaration binding themselves to abandon their Unions.

The results were thoroughly bad for both sides. The Engineering Employers, flushed with the victory, were encouraged to continue, and even to develop, the militant policy against this Unionism which they considered to be the arch-enemy of Industry, to be crushed out of existence in the interests of the men, as well as in their own. The Engineers, to whom such Unionism was becoming a religion, and who, because of this new coercion of Employers, viewed them as malignant enemies, only signed the bond not to join a Union to break it immediately and to make their Society stronger than before.

Their action is, of course, not defensible ethically. Their best friend, Tom Hughes, afterwards described it as "inexcusable." It gave legitimate reason for Employers to declare that Trade Unions were immoral,

and that it should be made a criminal act for any man to take part in such combination.

But looking back, and having regard to human nature as it is and always will be, we cannot wonder that these workers acted in bad faith, though we may deplore it. Not one of the men ever felt ashamed of the act at all.

It was, in fact, a state of war. The men believed that their cause was just, and because of this they had offered it for arbitration. The Employers believed that the men were rebels to authority and replied that they must surrender unconditionally. The men then suffered almost to starvation. They were driven into a corner and must either yield or starve. They did yield and signed to save their lives. If they had kept their bond they believed that for ever afterwards they would be in the power of men who would show no mercy and, therefore, that they would have to sell their birthright for—slavery.

There is not, and never can be, any excuse to be made for deliberate bad faith. This was tacitly admitted by the Executive Committee of the Union which declared themselves "and every man who unwillingly puts his hand to that detestable document which is forced upon us, to be as much destitute of that power of choice which should precede a contract as if a pistol were at his head, and he had to choose between death and degradation."

They chose degradation, and that was all about it. But how great a responsibility rested upon the Employers in forcing such an issue. It was an act which puts them out of court as wise masters of Industry.

War in its bitterest form. The strong showed no mercy; the weak no honour. A greater disaster could not have happened to the new Trade Unionism and to the pick of the workmen of the country.

The Employers during the next few years kept their advantage over Labour. In 1853 there were three great Strikes :—The Cotton-Spinners of Preston tried to get an advance of ten per cent. ; the Carpet-weavers of Kidderminster went out ; and there was a fierce fight for better wages by the Dowlais Ironworkers in Wales.

All these Strikes failed, and for some years no further great battles were fought against Employers by Trade Unions.

But any idea that this meant a weakening of Trade Unionism is to be dismissed at once. The more clearly Labour saw that the old weapon of the Strike, even under new conditions of better organization, failed to win them victories, the more jealously they threw their energies into developing and strengthening themselves, so that they might become a well-equipped and thoroughly trained army, able to deal faithfully with the Enemy at a later date.

The first step taken by the great Unions was one which was to lead to very serious difficulties later on. They refused to admit any man into the Society unless he was a skilled craftsman. To justify this they compared themselves to the learned professions, and said :—

> "The Youth who prepares himself as a useful member of society by the study of physic . . . expects that he is entitled to privileges to which the pretending quack can lay no claim ; and if . . . he finds himself injured by such a pretender, he has the power of instituting a course of law against him. But the Mechanic, though he may expend nearly an equal fortune and sacrifice . . . has no law to protect his privileges."

So they proceeded to prevent "quacks"—otherwise workmen who had not served their seven years' apprenticeship—from joining the Union at all.

This was sound logic at the time, and, from a self-interested point of view, an effective way of preserving

the privileges of "aristocratic" Labour, and even of holding Employers in check in reducing wages of Labour generally—as long as machinery was not invented which could weaken the position of the skilled handicraftsman. But when the time came for "standardization" and automatic machines, serious trouble arose for Craft Unions with their unskilled brethren. The strength of Labour as a fighting force, depends, as in all armies, on the solidarity of co-ordination of its various branches.

The immediate result was to divide still more the unskilled from the skilled man, and to drive downward into a separate class the men who, though they might have natural ability, had no chance afforded them of being apprenticed in early life, and were therefore cut off from the society of the best men in the Labour movement.

The other side of the case was that by this process of selection and a system of regular contributions by all Trade Union Members for sickness, old age, and other purposes, as well as for unemployment, together with careful management and well-thought-out administration, the Artisans in all trades began to create, out of their Unions, Corporations of weight and financial stability.

Their numbers grew steadily, as well as their funds. The Engineers doubled their numbers in the ten years following their strike—a grim commentary on the breaking of their pact with their Employers. They had a balance in hand of £73,398 in 1863, which was an enormous sum for workmen to accumulate in those days.

The Iron Founders, Stone Masons and Cotton Spinners were prosperous in proportion. The Cotton Weavers had taken up a method of working out with their Employers an agreed list of piece-rates. Apart from the Building Trade, where comparatively unskilled crafts-

men formed a large proportion of labour, there was now peace in Industry—a state of things greatly helped by good trade. The Engineers, indeed, were earnestly endeavouring to bring their Society into better odour with the Masters.

"Employers," said the Executive Council in 1855, "will not regard a Society like us with disfavour. They will begin to understand that it is not adapted, nor intended, to damage their interests, bur rather to advance them, by elevating the character of the workmen, and proportionately lessening their own responsibilities."

They went further, and with other groups of Trade Union leaders, advocated publicly "Councils of Conciliation" instead of Strikes and Lock-outs.

"The House of Commons Committee in 1856 and 1860 found the operatives in all trades disposed to support the principle of voluntary submission to Arbitration."[1]

The Employers, generally, were now quiescent. No evidence exists, so far as we know, that they made any active response to these advances from the men, but at least in most of the staple trades no disputes of any importance occurred.

But this was not the case in the Building Trade, then rapidly increasing in importance as population grew and good trade encouraged better housing. All through the peaceful years for other industries, local branches of men in this trade went on strike—often, be it said, against the wishes of their Central Executive. And these strikes, being shrewdly pushed at awkward moments, and against individual firms working under contracts, were very often successful. This, as usual, did more harm to the victors than to the vanquished, resulting in irritation, unrest, bitterness and retaliation. The individual firms, while giving in to complete their con-

[1] Webb, *History of Trade Unions*, p. 227.

tracts, began to unite against the common enemy, which they believed to be Trade Unionism, whereas it was, really, a spurious imitation of what the best leaders were establishing.

On the other hand, an Enquiry had been held in 1853 by the "National Association for the Promotion of Social Science"—a body of men which included Godfrey Lushington (afterwards Under Secretary of State for the Home Department), Mr. G. Shaw Lefevre, J. M. Ludlow, and Judge Hughes, and presided over by Sir James Kay Shuttleworth. It reported impartially concerning the movement in the Building Trade as a whole, and not long afterwards, in various provincial centres "working rules" were drawn up and signed by men on both sides. This was a decided step in advance, and might have had great results, but for these petty strikes by petty men. These disputes, however, produced an atmosphere in which peace was impossible. The more the men got by force, the more they were encouraged to fight again. The more the Masters lost, the more determined they became to "get their own back" when an opportunity presented itself.

This opportunity came, as it always will, when a cycle of depression of trade sets in.

In November, 1858, a movement among the Carpenters, Masons and Bricklayers for a nine-hours' day in the Building Trade, which had been on foot for some years, culminated in the formation of a joint Committee of the three Unions. This Committee sent in a Memorial to the Employers in the trade for the present ten-hours' day to be shortened by an hour. The Employers took no notice of the Memorial—at first—then refused with decision. Four firms were then petitioned, upon which one of the men who presented the Memorial was discharged by his Employer. This dismissal was as a

spark to gunpowder. The whole of the men of the Union employed by the firm struck at once, upon which, within a fortnight, every builder in London employing over fifty hands had locked out his men, and twenty-five thousand workers were without employment.

There was a pitched battle. The Master Builders had "organized," and their Central Association issued a direction to its members which shows clearly the point of view of employers at that time.

"No member of this Association," the direction ran, "shall engage or continue in his employment any contributor to the funds of any Trade Union or Trades Society which practises interference with the regulations of any establishment, the hours or terms of labour, the contracts or agreements of Employers and Employed or the qualification in terms of service."

Such conditions, if carried out to their logical conclusion, and accepted by the men in the spirit as well as the letter, would have meant the end of all combinations of workmen for mutual protection and the maintenance of a standard of life. The Employers who issued the decree, it is obvious, were convinced that only by returning to the industrial conditions of the Napoleonic Wars could their industry be effectively carried on.

Such a declaration, if made to-day, would be as strange as the apparition of a dodo in Piccadilly. But it was then a very pregnant sign of the times.

The growing influence in the trade of bodies of working men who were accumulating funds and power, and even prestige with important sections of the public, had become a veritable nightmare to Employers.

That in this instance, as in others since Chartism had spent its force, these Unions were officered by quiet-mannered and well-spoken leaders, in no way diminished, but rather added to the sense of injury and the apprehension felt by the Master-class.

Their point of view was that for Labour alone to determine the remuneration due to it, spelt ruin for all business.

It was a very natural point of view, and contained with it truths that certain sections of Labour are only to-day beginning to understand, namely, that you cannot get more than a pint out of a pint pot; that if workmen have a right to a living wage, employers have a right to a fair profit; and that for a workman to insist upon his remuneration for making goods to be exactly the same when those goods are at a premium as when they are not saleable, is not only not "business," but is not common-sense—and simply means that the Capital will not be supplied to make such goods.

The Masters of that day were right in this: that arbitrary rules for working so many hours a day for such and such pay—to be laid down by the workmen who, in those times, knew nothing of the cost of production, the risks of trade, and the demands of the markets—was intolerable and impossible. Where they were wrong was in failing to see that these united working men were men as intelligent and wide-awake as any other class, as well as possessing their full share of British obstinacy and pluck; and that to hit them over the head without parley or reason was to court trouble without end, and to play into the hands of all agitators against any ordered constitution of society.

The Building Masters' Declaration set the heather on fire. Subscriptions from Trade Unions in all parts of the country were sent to succour the locked-out operatives.

The largest of these subscriptions came from the Engineers, who had not forgotten their struggle, and now sent £3,000, a great sum for a Union to spend upon men outside its own ranks.

The dispute lasted from November, 1858 to February,

1860, and finally ended in the Workers relinquishing their claim for shorter hours, and the Employers withdrawing their document forbidding the employment of Trade Unionists.

The result was hailed by workmen generally as a tremendous achievement. They had won their freedom to combine. That through the victory at arms a bitterness against Trade Unionism, which might have serious consequences, would grow on the part of Employers everywhere they cared not a jot. Why should they, when the success brought them in more members everywhere, and caused bodies of workers who had not before understood the need of systematic organization, to form up Unions on the model of the Engineers' and the Stone Masons'?

The point of view of the militant Trade Unionist, then as now, was that the Employers, in the beginning, and before any combination among workmen had been possible, had played for their own hand alone. Therefore, by warfare only—conducted in a civilized manner if possible, but warfare for all that—could workmen ever expect to procure, and when procured, to maintain, any decently fair price for the "goods" they had to sell—their labour.

The "document" of the Building Employers was a direct attempt, Labour said, to destroy the only means it possessed to secure a market for its wares. Consequently after the issue had been met, and "Combination" had won the day, no further argument with Masters was possible. Trade Unionism was now a weapon which had been tried in the furnace, and had emerged stronger than before. A more important result still, in view of the bitterness against Trade Unions aroused in Employers, and the results of that bitterness which were presently to appear, was the fact that the principle had been fought and won in public, and that

the support already secured from middle-class men of advanced thought was widened considerably by the event. Public opinion began to take an active interest in industrial affairs, and was to become from this time onward an increasingly important factor in the settlement of disputes and in the development of the psychology of Industry as a human organism and not merely a business proposition.

Chapter XV — *The Fight for Life*

IN the years following the great strike in the Building Trade of 1859–60 the struggles between Trade Unions and Employers became increasingly strenuous, and there were times when it appeared likely that the Law would again be invoked to make Combinations of workmen "in restraint of trade" a penal offence.

This state of affairs, though welcomed by Employers, was not due primarily to their action. It arose, unfortunately, from the abuse of Trade Unionism by sections of its own members.

The condition, indeed, of Trade Unionism from 1850 onwards was most bewildering to the ordinary person outside its ranks—and to many even within them. At the head of the Movement stood moderate, sensible men, respected by every one, and using the powers placed in their hands with discretion: offering arbitration instead of strikes; claiming no more than a fair standard of life for workers; and in no way suggesting the least interference with the authority of an Employer in his own works; only asking that he should be prepared to admit the principle of collective bargaining, and to discuss grievances of workmen with representatives appointed by them. Such men were William Allan, the General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers; Applegarth, who created the Carpenters' Union; Daniel Guile, the Ironfounder; Edwin Coulson,

the Bricklayer, and other younger men, who may be called the founders of the Trade Union Congress of later years.

It would have been thought that under such leaders who, while being plain working men, received, deservedly, the friendship of men of every class who came into personal contact with them, the Trade Union Movement would not only become strong and well-organized, as it certainly was, but of a nature which could not give justifiable cause to any of its opponents for abuse.

This was far from being the case, and for the reason that the Trade Unionism of these leaders and that of certain powerful sections of their organization in various parts of the country, were not recognizable as the same thing.

The most striking example of this—used with deadly effect by all disbelievers in the principle of Trade Unionism—was to be found in Sheffield. Here such a state of things existed between 1866 and 1870 as to cause a writer, Frederick Hill, described even by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb as one who "represented the public feeling of the time," to say that the leaders of Trade Unionism were "a number of unscrupulous men leading a half-idle life, and feeding on the contributions of their dupes, and on a tax levied on such of the intelligent artisans as are in their ranks, but who would be only too happy to throw off their thraldom, and join the supporters of law and justice, did these but offer them adequate protection."

This was all pure nonsense as applied to the men we have mentioned. The occasion of this diatribe, however, was a system of intimidation and brutal treatment meted out by the rough element in certain Trade "Clubs" —as the Unions were still called in many parts of the country—to workmen who refused to join them, to go

on strike, or to take other action against Employers when called upon.

This gave Mr. Hill's article wide credence. The Sheffield "rattening" outrages in 1866 and onwards are well known. They included acts from the taking away of a man's tools if he were in arrear with his subscription, to the explosion of gunpowder in the troughs of the grinding wheels or other machinery among which the men worked, and even attempts to blow up warehouses, and the homes of workmen supposed to be in the special favour of masters. Some of these acts had fatal consequences.

All this was a very evil business indeed, and had serious results.

Apologists of these abuses of Trade Unionism point out, perhaps correctly, that the actual loss of life and limb was not great in the aggregate, and that only certain "Clubs" resorted to such practices. But this is not provable. We have seen evidence, and have personal knowledge ourselves, that in many parts of the country thousands of working-people lived in constant fear and dread for months and even years, of the local officials of Trade Unions, who used the powers created by their leaders in London, through the organization of their trade, in the worst spirit of vindictive petty tyranny. When agitations were decreed for a rise in wages, or shortening of hours, for instance, it was the well-known custom for every kind of "screw" to be put on by the Union men to terrorize all Labour in the district within the trades concerned into approval and support of the attack upon the masters.

As an instance of the conditions prevailing in Sheffield we may give the personal experience of a local Unitarian Minister, the Rev. Brooke Herford. He was very well known to workmen there, having at all times championed their cause—and—being a man of some influence in the

city—not without effect. The tyranny and brutality of the Trade "Clubs" against men who refused to obey their orders—which often had very little to do with the welfare of Labour—roused Brooke Herford, who, for all his cloth, was at heart a fighting man, to take direct action and denounce these practices in the teeth of the perpetrators thereof.

He saw only one way, and so caused it to be publicly announced that upon a certain Sunday afternoon he would address a meeting of workmen in a disused circus, chosen for meeting of Strikers and other Labour gatherings. He was warned by the Police that it would be more than his life was worth. Leaders of the Unions, who knew and respected him, privately besought him not to do it. But his blood was up: he would not be persuaded.

He had seen the bodies of men murdered secretly for refusal to take part in attacks on others whom they knew to be innocent of treachery to Trade Unionism; he had visited the families of workmen for months in Sheffield, and knew the terror and agony of the womenfolk. Most serious of all to him, a very earnest believer in the rights of Trade Unionism and the emancipation of Labour from oppression of bad employers, was the disgrace which was being brought upon the cause, and the actual success of the malefactors who, by specious appeals to the passions of the younger irresponsible workmen on the one hand, and remorseless espionage and terrorism—especially among women—on the other hand, were in a very powerful position. The Police could not get evidence, and hardly dared, themselves, to move. The whole place was under the grip of a secret and criminal *Camorra* calling itself Trade Unionism.

The circus was crammed to overflowing. Not a policeman was in the place. This the preacher had arranged beforehand. He went alone, unprotected,

and before he rose to address them he saw, as he expected, the doors locked and guarded by men he knew to belong to the Unions.

Brooke Herford had, indeed, no expectation whatever of seeing his family again. His object was to make his protest with all the strength that was in him, take the consequences, and hope that, as a result of his death, the decent-minded members of the Unions, who were already uneasy—*though still obstinately supporting and shielding the gangs*—would break out and crush the evil growth. He began his address by saying that he had not come amongst them with any false ideas of getting away, because he was going to tell them the whole truth and nothing but the truth. All he asked in return for any former service he had done them was they would give him a full hearing. They did, and that must be placed to their credit, for Brooke Herford was a master of that kind of outspoken invective which working men understand.

Nor did he attempt any sentimental appeal. He merely hit right and left remorselessly, holding up before their eyes the facts he knew, and commenting upon them with that peculiar pithiness of style only heard in perfection from a man bred in Lancashire.

When it was over there was an uncanny stillness in the hall, and then a yell came from some of the back benches, and a fierce rush was made for the platform and the speaker. But the gang, for the first time, found that they were not all-powerful.

Brooke Herford never knew definitely the motives which lay behind the action taken at this juncture by a portion of his audience. It was not preconcerted; it seemed to arise spontaneously and instinctively—an impulse of the moment.

When some few men who had come on purpose to try to protect him rose at the yell, and closed round him

nearly half the meeting joined them, and an extraordinary struggle then took place. The wilder spirits were literally out for his blood: some charged the platform, while others guarded the doors. It appeared at first that they would succeed. They attacked; the others only defended. Then the current set in the other way. A prominent and physically powerful Trade Union leader, who, it appeared afterwards, had only "dropped in"—as he expressed it—to "see what was up," suddenly with a roar sprang at the attackers and hit out with fists that were not to be denied.

His example was effectively followed, and in a few minutes the attackers were forced back, the doors flung open, and a very sincerely astonished crowd of policemen, who had, in spite of Brooke Herford's request, assembled outside, saw the preacher come safely out of the circus, guarded by a phalanx of the Trade Unionists themselves, many known to belong to the obnoxious "Clubs." These men escorted him to his home, and, for security, guarded it all night.

The next day the Minister went about his usual avocations, and was never molested at all. Not long afterwards the Camorra began to weaken, and the confession of Broadhead and other leaders broke up the whole conspiracy.

We have given this incident in detail because it represents in a peculiar way the psychology of the rank and file of workmen of the rougher class to-day—men who are the despair of many Trade Union leaders, and whom not one employer in a thousand understands at all.

Here were a crowd of men, the majority of whom had hands literally stained with the blood of victims to "rattening" and a great many other crimes which are not mentionable in Trade-Union literature. They were not in love with ministers of religion any more than most workmen are now. They had not invited this

particular minister to say what he thought of them; and in spite of personal service to individual members of their Unions, he was an outsider. Last of all, he made no appeal to their softer emotions, nor attempted —being far too angry, as he admitted afterwards—to do anything of the kind. Yet they listened to him to the end; protected his life, after hard fighting, and spent a night out round his house. Moreover—most significant of all—his personal safety afterwards was never challenged, even by those who would have killed him at the time.

The moral of this incident we offer to those who consider that the violent Striker and mob-worker is past praying for. This moral is that those who would control or lead workmen should discard all protection by force or cloak of authority, but—as Cromwell did on Corkbush field—appeal direct, man to man, to their innate manhood and sense of justice.

Turning again to the Trade Union leaders in London, and at the heads of the great Organization, all through the crisis caused by these outrages, we find them unflinchingly antagonistic to the Camorra of these Trade Clubs. The London Trades Council and the Executive of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers sent a joint deputation to Sheffield to investigate, which in its Report roundly abused "the abominable practice of rattening, which is calculated to demoralize those concerned in it and to bring disgrace on all Trade Combinations." Public Meetings of Trade Unionists were held in all parts of the country disowning, and expressing indignation at, all the doings at Sheffield. Finally, one of the leaders, Applegarth, suggested to the Home Secretary a Commission of Enquiry into the subject.

That a workman could, in a friendly way, see a great Minister of State, and be received with respect in such a time, is eloquent testimony to the change since 1825,

when Francis Place distributed his artisans from the North about the Lobbies of the House of Commons.

No middle-class men commanded the workmen now. Men born and bred in their own ranks were directly responsible, and had to meet the public indignation, and the bitter attacks of Employers, brought on by the Sheffield outrages.

But it was, none the less, one of the greatest crises of the whole Trade Union and Labour Movement. Trade was bad in these years—before the Franco-Prussian war, and disputes were raging in trade after trade, the Employers lowering wages, or locking-out their men; or the men going on strike. Every one, on both sides, was heated and bitter. The men declared, not without reason, that every effort they made, however peaceful, to improve, or even to preserve their low standard of life, was met by Employers by arbitrary and cruel acts, the object of which was clearly to break the power of workmen to act together and do anything in combination in their own interests. The Employers retorted, also with reason, that no sooner did workmen form Trade Unions than they became worse tyrants and masters over their own members than Employers ever were in the factories: that since Trade Unions had come into being no owner of a business was master in his own house, and that unless freedom of contract between individual workmen and their Employer, irrespective of any outside "official"—representing any class of workmen as a whole—were to return, Industry would be ruined and working men starve. Trade Unions, they said, were "a poisonous plant," ruining the character of the British working man.

It was at such a time that one of the leaders of Labour made the following declaration:—

"A great many Strikes, and perhaps Lock-outs too, have arisen from a stubborn refusal on the part of both sides to look the

question honestly and fairly in the face. . . . Let us examine ourselves and see if there be any wicked way in us that contributes to this unsatisfactory state of things, and if we discover that we are not blameless, then we ought first of all to set our own house in order. . . . Then let us examine the opposite side of the camp, and see how they stand, and if we find that they have not done all that they ought to have done with a view to prevent these evils, let us undisguisedly and in plain language point out where we consider they have erred, and by increasing public opinion in a healthy way against tyranny—some people call it, but perhaps a milder word would be better—against the unwise policy used, it will do much to repress it in future."

Nothing could be more moderate or sensible ; or more manly and dignified. It was also perfectly genuine, and the man who made it was George Newton, the Secretary of the Glasgow Trade Committee. Yet it did not, and could not, exercise the least effect on the situation except to cause the enemies of Trade Unionism to scoff at the hypocrisy and guile of the Conference of leaders who endorsed it, representing 200,000 workmen. For this Conference was actually held at Sheffield in 1866.

That it was possible for men representing Unions from all parts of the country to hold out an olive branch to the public and to Employers, while, in the very city they were meeting in, crime was stalking unashamed among men in their own ranks, is the clearest proof of the inherent weakness of organized Labour as a movement of that time. It was a congregation of unco-ordinated sections. Its leaders, in spite of their birth and upbringing, were nearly as far removed from the rank and file even of their own Unions—and, of course, far more so as regards their comrades who had no Unions—as the barristers and professors who had espoused their cause.

This fact, the public significance of which they do not seem to have realized, was the basis upon which Employers and all who saw the seamy side of the workmen's combinations rested their case against it.

What service—except to hoodwink the public—Employers said, did such high-priests of Trade Unionism perform? Their very respectability and dignity was an offence, when it covered and protected, instead of sternly disciplining, the secret and inhuman tyranny of such men as the Sheffield ratteners.

So felt those who found neither their property nor the persons of their workers safe from violence.

The mistake Employers made, which was to cost them very dear, was refusal to admit these leaders to any confidence; or to honestly test their professions of moderation. Had they done this, the Industrial history of the next fifty years would have been very different. They took no consideration for the enormous difficulties of the leaders—because no general education was provided for poor labouring people, and who, for the lack of it, interpreted Trade Unionism in general as merely a means of material gain over an "enemy." Such education, which it was the business of Employers as masters in Industry to lead in providing, they disapproved of—as has been said. So, though their criticism of rank-and-file Trade-Union violence and ignorance was just, on the whole, and their abuse of leaders for failing to deal with it extremely natural, they made things very difficult for the best men in the movement and provided no constructive alternative at all. They took up a merely negative attitude throughout.

Had such an attitude been adopted by the public as a whole at this time, Trade Unionism would, from this time forth have become a real danger to the country and the State. It was far too strongly entrenched to be crushed. It must have become as revolutionary as Chartism and a hundred times more formidable—for, unlike the Chartists, it had able and honest leaders —once, its leaders were separated from men of other

classes, and treated, as Employers of the day would like to have treated them, as outcasts of criminal intent.

But the nation was saved from this catastrophe, as it has so often been saved in similar crises, by the best of its middle-class men.

It happened that just at this time, when the revelations of Sheffield and other places were arousing public feeling against organized Labour, as it had not been aroused, perhaps, since the days of the French Revolution, a blow from quite another quarter fell upon Trade Unions. It was decided by the Courts of Law that they were "illegal associations," and, as such could not protect against theft by their officers the funds they had accumulated to the tune of nearly a quarter of a million pounds.

The position was described by Frederick Harrison as follows :—

> "The judgment (which stated that Trade Unions were illegal associations by causing, when acting against Employers, 'restraint of trade') lays down that Trade Unions, of whatever sort, are in their nature contrary to public policy and that their object in itself will vitiate every association and every transaction into which it enters. . . . In a word Unionism becomes . . . something like betting and gambling, public nuisances and immoral considerations—things to be condemned and suppressed by the law."

It can be conceived what this meant to the men responsible for Trade Union funds and organization. They saw all that they had accomplished by careful thrift and administration—and, ironically enough, by their constant refusal to encourage strikes—lost beyond recovery; together with a demoralization among their members which would be a moral disaster far worse even than material bankruptcy.

The action taken by these leaders was to call upon Harrison, Hughes, Beesley and other friends to come to the rescue. The response was immediate and in every

way effective. Not for the first time, in a Trade Union crisis, the workers received the best that acute men of legal knowledge and experiences of affairs could give them. As friends and equals these professional men threw themselves into the breach, and back to back with Labour fought the good fight for justice, and showed that in this country no matter what strength class-prejudices possess at a given time, even when there is cause for grave indictment of Labour organization, fair-play will be given when an appeal is made to the bar of public opinion.

Yet it was a grave crisis, and the issue lay in the balance for four anxious years.

Chapter XVI — *The Price of Victory*

THE fight of Labour and its allies in 1867–8 to prevent Trade Unionism from being "suppressed by direct penal enactment" was as hard a task as that of Francis Place in securing the repeal of the Combination Acts. It was a real ordeal by fire.

The public, at the beginning, was on the side of the Employers, and the Employers were honestly and entirely convinced that Trade Unionism of any kind, particularly of the moderate and cautious kind, was injurious in every way, not only to themselves but to the best interests of the Nation.

When the Royal Commission of Enquiry, asked for by Applegarth on behalf of the Unions, was appointed and Employers gave evidence before it, they concentrated their case upon the endeavours of certain of the large Unions to prevent sub-contracting, piece-work, and free employment of apprentices. They emphasized the difference between a Trade Union which collected funds for insurance against sickness and old age and spent them upon giving allowances to men on Strike, and a "Friendly Society" which made provision for misfortune alone. In a word, they made it clear that their chief objection to legalized combinations of working men was not the lawless tyranny in Sheffield and elsewhere of Grinders, Brickmakers, and other Trade Clubs of stalwarts in the movement, but the growing strength and stability of the large Societies, whose members, if

they struck, did so with a definite plan, and deliberately to exercise some control upon the "standard of life" of their class. The argument of the Employers before the Commission was that the administration of Industry "exclusively belongs to the Employer himself; a matter in which no other party, much less the operatives, have got anything to do."

This, in fact, became the central issue of the Enquiry, and, in the light of Trade Union demands of late years, it is interesting to note that Applegarth, representing the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters, the third largest Union then existing, protested that Trade Unionists had no objection to machinery or piece-work or overtime or the free employment of apprentices; thus showing that a considerable change of front had taken place since the Engineers' Strike of 1852.

The Trade Unions won. The proceedings and Report of the Commission were widely published, and the comment of *The Times* gives in a nutshell the result of the Enquiry on the main issue.

> "True Statesmanship," *The Times* said, "will seek neither to augment nor reduce the influence of Trade Unions, but accepting it as a fact, will give it free scope for legitimate development."

The Commission did not, as a whole, consider Trade Unions beneficial economically to Workmen, and while it recommended their legalization, it imposed conditions which denied them aggressive powers vital to their success as fighting machines against Associations of Employers. But it refused to take the view that it was prejudicial to Industry for working men to combine, and to accumulate corporate funds to preserve, and improve, their industrial position in life.

Parliament accepted the Report, and thus, by public consent, and with the approval of the great organs of the "governing classes," Trade Unionism, after a public

Enquiry, and in spite of all that Employers brought forward to its detriment, took its place as one of the recognized Institutions of the country.

The importance of this fact is hardly to be exaggerated, especially as very shortly afterwards the franchise was extended to workmen in the Boroughs, and manual workers themselves became possessed of the political power which many, even then, believed was the chief strength of the Employer-class, and the absence of which their own greatest weakness.

The moderate leaders of the Unions breathed freely, and felt that they had not toiled in vain. Their middle-class allies rejoiced. They had cause. The Revolution of reason versus force, which began after Chartism was crushed, had gained its first victory. Democracy had planted itself firmly in Industrial affairs. The Control of Industry by a class had ceased to be recognized, politically or socially, by the British public. And that public, when once such a step is taken, never looks back.

But there was another side to the shield which, naturally enough, the leaders and friends of Trade Unionism who had converted *The Times* did not perceive. The victory was won upon a clear pledge from such men as Applegarth that on the main issues of Industrial progress and expansion, piece-work and overtime, free introduction of youthful labour, free importation of cheap goods from abroad, Trade Unionism as a whole agreed with the Employers, and that the men who believed in force of any kind in Labour disputes were outside the ranks of responsible leadership in Trade Unions of any standing. The attitude Applegarth and his colleagues took up, and which was, of course, the foundation of the arguments of their allies, was to the effect that with Employers as a class Trade Unionists desired close co-operation ; but that it was only fair-play for Labour to possess the power to defend its interests.

Such a plea was perfectly fair, and the guarantee made of Trade Union principles and policy were made in the best of good faith. Furthermore, no men ever tried harder or with more determination to carry into practice the principles they laid down as fundamental, than Applegarth and his colleagues in London.

But as with the prophesies of Francis Place in 1825, that once give workmen freedom to combine and they would soon cease to want to do so, so with the statement of principles to the Royal Commission by the men in chief authority among the Trade Unions in 1867—they were not in accordance with facts. The Leaders were not masters even in their own house even when the Commission was sitting. There was one George Potter, who in 1860 had started a weekly journal called the *Beehive*, and like Applegarth, belonged to the Amalgamated Carpenters. His influence among the great Societies was not large, but he was continually before the public calling meetings of disaffected men, and denouncing the negotiations of the leaders on every occasion. He was bitterly described by the President of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers as "the aider and abettor of strikes. He thought of nothing else: he followed no other business: strikes were his bread-and-cheese: in short, he was a strike-jobber, and he made the *Beehive* newspaper his instrument for pushing his nose into every unfortunate dispute that sprang up."

We have the Potter type with us to-day. There will always be a number of such men biting the heels of those who strive to lead Labour to the Promised Land of a responsible position in Industrial affairs.

Mr. Potter and his tribe created a difficult situation for the Trade Unions as time went on. The Royal Commission had bitterly disappointed the Employers, and had justified the cause of organized Labour before

the world, but it had done so on conditions. Labour was free to form Societies and to amass funds to protect and even advance its standard of life, but it must not use any means to that end which could be interpreted by the Law as intimidation to non-Trade Union men, or as means whereby trade itself would suffer. Men might strike if they wished, and live upon pay provided by their accumulated funds, but no "picketing" was allowable, or any action which would prevent, by persuasion or otherwise, other workmen taking up the tools the Strikers had laid down. In the words of Henry Crompton, a voluntary legal adviser to the Trade Unions, "a Strike was perfectly legal: but if the means employed were calculated to coerce the Employer, they were illegal means, and a combination to do a legal act by illegal means was a criminal conspiracy."

As an interpretation of the Law on picketing it is recorded that in 1871 seven Welsh women were imprisoned for saying "Bah" to one Blackleg. The record does not state how near were the finger-nails of these ladies to the man's face when the remark was made, but the position was sufficiently absurd.

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, in their indignation for the anomaly of enactments which "take away with one hand what they give with the other," said "the whole history of this agitation (for a change in the law) proves how completely the governing classes were out of touch with the recently enfranchised artisan."

This may be, but were the "governing classes" or even the Royal Commission alone to blame? The plain fact of the case it appears to us to have been that Applegarth and the rest of the leaders, in order to counteract the public fear of violence and misrule in Trade Unionism, had misrepresented to the Commission, without intention perhaps, the Labour movement as a whole. Undoubtedly, since 1852, these leaders had striven

untiringly and not without success, to limit Strikes, and even to prevent their occurrence altogether. They themselves wanted Industrial difficulties to be settled by conciliation, and on the principle, if agreement could not be come to between the parties, by arbitration. But a great proportion of the men they led had no such desire, and even if this had been so, the unbending opposition of the majority of the Employers, of that time, to giving more recognition than they could possibly help to any kind of claim from Labour for collective bargaining, was bound to force the Unions into the position of fighting corporations sooner or later. The public did not understand this, nor that, in self-defence, the Unions must be allowed the effective use of the weapon of the Strike. Applegarth and the rest had made it appear that Trade Unionists were, in the main, sweetly reasonable people bearing olive branches. This being the case, the public said in effect, why need they worry about weapons at all? The public was misled and the Royal Commission was inconsistent, but the cautious leaders of Labour and their enthusiastic allies must share the responsibility for the mistakes made by both public and Commission.

Trade Unionists, naturally, saw only the evil consequences of the inconsistencies, and felt bitterly aggrieved. They set about taking steps to secure the powers required to make a strike effective. This meant a struggle direct with Parliament itself, because the findings of the Commission had been embodied in two Bills: the first, which legalized the positions of the Unions; the second, as a Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which made all actions of the Unions "in restraint of trade" illegal.

It was a very serious issue. Employers, of course, took every possible advantage of the position, and prosecutions innumerable occurred of Trade Unionists when-

ever a Strike was threatened or declared, for "coercing" Employers, in contravention of the Law. It was not fair. Owners of Works had a great many ways which the Law allowed by which they could coerce recalcitrant Labour, even apart from "workshop discipline"—a potent weapon in itself.

Labour, unless it took to secret ca' canny—not then organized as in after-years—had only one weapon—the Strike, and this, to be effective, meant preventing blacklegism and—breaking the law.

In such a position of affairs Labour felt itself to be in the position of a man fighting with one hand tied behind him. The sense of injustice rankled fiercely, and the old bitterness against Employers, which the moderate leaders had done much to modify, again grew steadily among all Trade Unionists. And now they had the power of the vote. Four years they struggled unsuccessfully, and then their chance came by political action.

In the General Election of 1874 Labour, for the first time, helped Tory candidates into power, and the new Conservative Government, whether out of gratitude or hope of favours to come, appointed immediately another Royal Commission to inquire into "Labour Laws."

In 1875 the Home Secretary, Mr. (afterwards Viscount) Cross, introduced Bills which repealed the "Criminal Law Amendment Act" unconditionally. "Peaceful Picketing" was legalized. No acts by groups of workmen were to be punished unless it would be a criminal offence if done by one man. The whole scheme or purpose of Trade Unionism—that workmen must, by law, possess all necessary defensive and offensive powers to guard their standard of life—was fully conceded by Parliament, and the victory of Collective Bargaining, won in 1869, made complete.

The event was, of course, received by Trade Unions

with immense satisfaction. The hero of the hour for them was the new Home Secretary, and very warm eulogies were passed by most Radical workmen on the leaders of the Conservative party.

These amendments of the old Act were undoubtedly just. It had not been common sense to give Trade Unions position without the power to maintain it. But the way in which it was done sowed the seed for infinite trouble in the future.

Though Labour was not, for many years yet, to form a "class" political party, it now inevitably came to the conclusion that political organization was an effective weapon by which it could maintain and improve its Industrial position. Matters which were really a question solely of adjustment between Employers and Employed, and which affected economics of Industry only, might, Labour saw, now be made political questions —to be decided, not upon principles of justice and business-like fair-play, but upon the strength of voting power or political influences of a "party."

Political class-consciousness in Labour was born in 1875.

Chapter XVII *The Crest of the Wave*

THE Trade Union Movement may be said to have attained its majority at the hands of the Conservative Party in 1875–6. In the words of its chief historians: [1] —"Collective bargaining . . . with all its necessary accompaniments, was, after fifty years of legislative struggle, finally recognized by the law of the land."

The jubilation of the workmen's leaders was unbounded. The public was pleased with itself because it had done justice. The "party" laid the unction to its soul that it had secured a great political advantage.

But there were men, and some of the best in the country, who were by no means satisfied or easy in their minds. John Bright had said in 1860: "Combinations, in the long run, must be as injurious to a workman as to the Employer against whom he is contending." He was of the same opinion fourteen years later. Lord Shaftesbury, who was still actively befriending Labour by fighting for humane treatment for women and children in Factories, wrote that "All the single despots and all the aristocrats that ever were or will be, are as puffs of wind compared with these tornadoes, the Trade Unions."

The immediate cause of such misgivings and dread on the part of men of tried loyalty to working people was the violence of strikes which, all through this period,

[1] Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 293.

raged as hotly as ever in the Coal Mines, the Building Trade, and other industries not controlled by the Societies whose leaders assembled in London with Beesley and Frederick Harrison, and, in conjunction with these strikes, the growing practice of intimidation and general persecution of non-trade-unionists by their organized brethren.

Now, as we have said, it was only by the most solemn repudiation of the Trade Union leaders at Westminster of all such practices, and the proof given that they were confined to unruly elements, and did not form any part of orthodox Labour policy, that the legal restrictions as to Picketing, etc., were removed.

A great responsibility, therefore, rested upon the men who had fought and won the battle for legal freedom for "peaceful" organization of Labour.

Unfortunately, as shown by the conference of delegates at Sheffield passing peace resolutions in the midst of crime and outrage in that city, the men trusted by Harrison and Beesley and personally well worthy of that trust, were not in control of their own people. It was not a case of rebellion against authority, or divisions of opinion and strife in counsel. It was sheer growth, on a sectional basis, of new forces among workmen in all parts of the country, and for which no leader in London could possibly undertake responsibility.

Industry, both as regards development of trade and business on the part of merchants and manufacturers, and on the part of Labour by the formation of close corporations of Trade-Combinations, was growing at a pace never before known.

British goods were wanted in every market in the world. Free-trade was bringing into the country food and raw material in enormous volume and at lowest rates.

It was not that workmen were espousing the shib-

boleths of Karl Marx. That was to come later. It was that Labour was becoming, trade by trade, a strong, virile, aggressive force, or rather collection of forces, which was to out-do Employers in hard materialism and shrewd, calculating methods of obtaining advantage for themselves.

The Coal Miners, then as now, combined rough ways and life with great shrewdness and a power of endurance almost unequalled among other groups of workers. After losing battle after battle with the owners, they succeeded in 1863 in forming a Miners' National Union. The Union was formed at a great Conference at Leeds, of which the key-note was protest against the excessive hours worked in the mines. They had a very weighty and sensible word to say on the subject, which science has proved, to-day, to be true:

> "Over-toil produces over-supply; low prices and low wages follow; bad habits and bad health follow, of course, and then diminished production and profits are inevitable."

The Report then went on to give the other side:—

> "Reduction of toil, and consequent improved bodily health, increases production in the sense of profit, and limits it so as to avoid over-stocking; better wages induce better habits, and economy of working follows."

Men who reasoned in this way were not the illiterate ruffians which too many Coal-Owners of that day, and of even later times, informed the public, and themselves believed, their workers in the pits to be. They had been so once, owing to conditions of life which were often appalling by the neglect of their landlords, who were generally the owners of the mines, to provide decent housing or any educational or social amenities. By the 'sixties, however, a very great improvement took place, thanks to religious teaching from poor Methodist ministers, and sturdy determination on the part of

the more intelligent miners to educate themselves, and, by this means, to learn how to fight their battles better for an improvement in their Industrial position.

The lessons taught by their masters, however—that Industrial arrangements had no human side, but were sharp business in which cunning and strength, without regard for fair play, were the qualities needed—were well learnt.

The Miners desired, for instance, to shorten their hours of labour, which were then ten hours a day, to eight. They knew it was useless to take up the matter with the Owners. They must appeal to Parliament. But would Parliament be impressed by a reduction in the working day for men? Not in those days. It would, however, do something for boys, because Lord Shaftesbury had educated the public on the issue of women and children's labour in factories. Consequently, the Miners suddenly became most solicitous for the welfare of their lads, and drafted a Bill for an eight-hours' day for their benefit. They knew by experience that this would end in a reduction for themselves later on.

The Cotton Operatives, in whose industry the Factory legislation had been most active, took the same line, and for the same reasons.

In the trade revival of 1871–2, when the pressure of orders caused Employers to get the maximum amount of labour out of their operatives, the Spinners of Oldham struck for a Saturday half-holiday. The strike failed, and immediately they turned their thoughts to Parliament. They formed a "Short-time Committee" and agitated for shorter hours for women and children—saying nothing about themselves.

It was a trap for the philanthropists to fall into. Nothing was said about Trade Union rights. The platform and the Press rang with the woes of women

and children under the ten-hours' day then worked. By this means and again by the political exigencies of the General Election of 1874, Shorter Time, "fought from behind the women's petticoats," was, after many vicissitudes, conceded.

No one, of course, can blame the Trade Unions overmuch for this camouflage.

But it is significant of the false basis on which all reforms in Industry for the benefit of Labour rested, at the very time when Trade Unionism was being fully legalized and empowered to act, that nothing could be achieved by direct negotiation between masters and men. Shorter hours, even for women and children, had to be forced through by Parliamentary pressure, in the teeth of Employers' opposition.

It cannot be wondered at that as Labour grew more and more powerful at the polls it used uneconomic weapons to achieve its purpose, and thought nothing of the effects upon Industry of less work and more pay. Self-interest and a hard bargain had always been the motto of the Masters; it now became the way of Trade Unionism.

It followed that the Unions required a new type of man as leader and officials. Such men as Applegarth and Allan, who strove for an ideal, even while they organized their forces and built up a reserve fund for emergencies, and who shared the enthusiasm for freedom and democracy of Beesley and Frederick Harrison, gave way to "a body of keen, astute and alert-minded officials—a combination, in the Trade Union world, of the accountant and the lawyer."

This description given by Mr. and Mrs. Webb of the leaders of the Cotton Operatives, stands for the majority of the men who held the reins of the Trade Union government for the next twenty years.

The Employers had made it manifest that they would fight Labour Combinations to the last ditch by "Business

methods." They would give no quarter to the men who denied them sole mastership of Industrial relations and Industrial conditions.

Labour took up the challenge with a will. Being now able to collect and to hold funds, they proceeded to acquire them rapidly by compulsory levy on their members as well as by voluntary subscription. They were aided in this part of their work by the good trade of the early 'seventies, and they made the most of it. They began, also, to understand how to spend money. Union after Union set aside funds, now, to pay full-time Officials, instead of expecting the onerous work of their Secretaries to be "overtime" of the most exhausting kind after a long day at the machine or the bench. This gave the young men of intelligence and ambition in Trade Union ranks a career for which to work and educate themselves. They did so, and the movement began to consolidate and grow beyond knowledge; assume form and shape and by its strength and individuality and peculiar characteristics lay its impress upon national working-class life.

Trade Unionism, the industrial combination of one class of the community for the advancement of the material interests of that class, has been, and is now in this country, the most potent weapon of Revolution ever forged. Its peculiar power here is due, probably, to the way in which it fits our national character. It begins with comradeship and brotherhood and the cultivation of the social, as against the anti-social, instincts of Syndicalism. Then it directs those instincts, and the force they create, into practical, realistic action. This action, be it noted, is not necessarily aggressive, still less has it a destructive object. Though it is definitely self-assertive it only becomes an offensive movement in the last resort.

The unspoken cry of the Trade Union has always

been to the Employers—"Give us a chance;—give us a bit;—give us a right to live;—give us our share."

It was not until after generations of struggle and, too often, hopeless knocking at the closed gate of partnership in Industry, that Labour in Britain began tentatively to feel the muscles of its arms, and consider whether it could not and might not smash that gate by force of some kind, and try its own hand at mastership through political power.

In the 'seventies and 'eighties the Revolution which began after Chartism died, took a very considerable step towards becoming consciously a separate-class-power in national life.

In 1871–2, as trade was expanding and Employers were trying to get the maximum of work out of Labour, Labour rebelled, and a great Strike took place for a nine-hours' day. This was no canny, crafty push "behind women's petticoats."

The Engineers in Sunderland started the movement openly in April, 1871, and in a few weeks the local employers had yielded. The other Unions took hold; non-union men joined heart and soul, and like an epidemic the demands spread from trade to trade. A "Nine-hours League" was formed, non-unionists side by side with the men who had most bitterly denounced them.

The Employers fought fiercely and foreign workmen were imported to Newcastle. But for the first time the Masters were defeated. It is believed that Strikes, to succeed, must be backed by strongly entrenched and financed Trade Unions. The success of this Strike proved that this is not always the case. The real truth is that they require a just cause most. Without this—if the dispute is widespread—they rarely succeed, no matter how full their coffers may be. With such a cause, understood by the public at large, Strikes have rarely failed.

Such a cause had the "Nine-hours League" in 1871.

This was before the "Fatigue Research" work and scientific tests for over-strain, but the common sense of the man-in-the-street told him that hard labour in Ship-yard and Engineering-shop could not be continued, without exhaustion, for more than nine hours daily. Even this gave a man no leisure except on a Sunday. There could be no Saturday afternoon holiday. So, when the Trade Unions concerned, and all their non-Union friends, took off their coats regardless of risks and lack of funds, with their cry for a fair chance to live, as well as to work, and threw down a challenge to the Masters before the public, there was an instant response. No violence occurred, or was threatened. It was a bloodless campaign, but with a cleverly organized publicity which carried all before it. Money, after an interval, poured in. Well-known papers acted as Collectors; and, to crown it all, *The Times* and *Spectator* took up the cause, and the former, in a leader, actually reproved Employers severely, and stated that their conduct throughout the dispute had been "imprudent and impolitic."

The reply of the Employers to the attack is very interesting, because it was obviously spontaneous and perfectly sincere. "We had imagined," they said, "that a determined effort to wrest concessions from Employers by sheer force of combination was not a thing which found favour with the more educated and intelligent classes."

The point as to whether the "concessions" were just, or not, was a matter which the Employer of that day could not feel was anybody's business but his own. It was enough for him that "force of combination" among workmen was directed to "wrest" it from him. It was impossible for him to understand how any "educated and intelligent class of person" could approve the use of force against Masters for any purpose whatsoever.

It is also obvious that to these Employers working people were not to be considered "educated" in any sense, or even "intelligent."

We draw attention to this argument of Employers, not because we would suggest that it was unnatural at that time, but because it is an illustration of the hopeless ignorance even of men of standing and ability of what their workpeople had become, both mentally and in point of education. The man who wrote this to *The Times* was Mr. William, afterwards Lord, Armstrong. The workman who led and organized the "Nine-hours League" was John Burnett, an Engineer at the time, but shortly afterwards to become a journalist, then Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade, and finally Chief Labour Correspondent of the Departments sent over by the Government to the United States on very important national business.

If such men had met face to face in the first instance, and tested each other's capacity, and discussed the subject fairly on its merits as man to man, does anyone suppose that any strike would have been necessary at all? At the very least, so able and discerning a man of business as Lord Armstrong would never again have been under the delusion that Intelligence and Education were the prerogative of certain "classes."

The Strike lasted five months. Then trade after trade adopted the principle. It became, however, a practice for masters who needed their jobs concluded quickly to ask men to work overtime, and often in such a manner that the men had to accede or risk dismissal. Where Employers were strongly organized, they insisted upon the right to require overtime to be worked. But the principle of a limited day's work for a certain wage was established by the Strike.

Again, however, as with all victories in Industry gained by force, and not by mutual agreement arising

from mutual understanding, the principal fruit of the victory was the bitterness which rankled in the souls of the defeated. The Employers yielded to the strength of the men supported by public opinion for the moment, but they waited grimly for their turn. They were neither converted, nor even convinced that the men had any "case." Their point of view—that trade was trade and business business; that humane considerations had no fundamental weight where Industry was concerned, and that private morality was one thing and industrial morality quite another—remained unchanged.

Chapter XVIII *The Slough of Despond*

THE year 1874 saw organized Labour in the strongest position, in regard to numbers and funds, that it had ever known. Its membership was well over a million, and, for the first time, Employers as a body acknowledged publicly, and even emphasized the point, that Trade Unionism had become a very great power indeed.

A "National Federation of Associated Employers of Labour," which included the largest firms in all the staple industries, issued a statement which said that individual Employers, and even local Federations of Employers, were "helpless against the extraordinary development—far-reaching but openly avowed designs—and elaborate organization of Trade Unions."

This statement, however, being accompanied with a suggestion that all Employers should join the new National body as a defence against the encroachment of Labour, was doubtless somewhat coloured for a purpose. But in the main it expressed the views of the average Master in Industry. After speaking of the "enormous funds" of the Unions, and the lavishness with which the Workmen supported their Societies, the Manifesto continued :—

"The Trade Unions have an ample and well-paid staff of leaders . . . all forming a class apart, a profession with interests distinct from, though not necessarily antagonistic to, those of

the workpeople they represent, but, from their very *raison d'être*, hostile to those of the Employers and the rest of the community."[1]

Here we see definitely laid down the determination of Employers to view all organization of Labour as an offence against the Community at large, as well as against themselves. The circular goes on to enunciate all the powers of these "leaders." That they could "exercise pressure upon Members of Parliament . . . out of all relation to their real powers, and beyond belief except to those who have had the opportunity of witnessing its effect." How they had "the attentive ear of the Ministry of the day; and their communications are received with instant and respectful attention." And how they employed "through their command of money, the imposing aspect of their organization, and partly, also, from the mistaken humanitarian aspirations of a certain number of literary men of good standing, a large army of literary talent which is *prompt* in their service on all occasions of controversy."

This "tribute" of the great Captains of Industry to the strength of Trade Unions delighted, of course, the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, which was now the recognized Central body of Organized Labour. They reprinted the document and circulated it among all bodies of Workers.

As events fell out, the compliment was soon to prove a very empty one. Before the end of 1874 trade began to shrink, and the demand for labour with it. The inevitable results followed. Employers were in power again. The Trade Unions, faced with widespreading and increasing unemployment among their members, found themselves at a disadvantage in every way. A tragic account is given by the *Beehive* and other Labour journals of the time. Strike followed strike. The

[1] Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 327.

Miners and Iron Workers led off in South Wales in January, 1875. They had already submitted to wage-cuts, but the proposal of a third reduction of ten per cent. they refused point-blank. The struggle lasted four months, and then they went back, having to accept a reduction of twelve and a half, not ten per cent., and, what was considered far worse by a new school of Labour, their submitting to an agreement that "any change in the wage rates shall depend on a sliding scale of wages to be regulated by the selling price of coal."

In 1877 the Carpenters' Union in Manchester struck for better conditions, as the Building Trade was still prosperous. They lost so badly that their Union, of which Applegarth had been the head, collapsed—though it had been one of the strongest in the Kingdom. In April of the same year the Clyde Shipwrights demanded an increase of wages, upon which the Employers locked them out, and the whole shipping industry on the Clyde was at a standstill for more than three months. It was not until September that the dispute was settled by arbitration—completely against the men.

While this stoppage occurred in Scotland the Stonemasons, in July, struck against a firm which imported German workmen—there had been a demand by the men for better wages and shorter hours. The struggle developed into a fight between the Union and the Master Builders throughout the country. It went on for eight months and then the men returned to work on the Employers' terms. In the Cotton trade a bitter struggle against reductions was accompanied by violence. The house of a leading Employer was looted and burnt. In ten weeks the men had gone back—beaten.

Thus in one year the Unions in four great industries tried conclusions with Employers, and were worsted in each case.

But these disasters were nothing to the happenings

in 1878, 1879, and 1880. The great failure of the Glasgow Bank in 1879 was not only in itself a catastrophe, but it was a pregnant sign of the times. There were bankruptcies of great concerns in many trades and the unemployed on the books of the largest Unions went up to twenty-five per cent. of the total membership. The misery and distress in unskilled and unorganized labour may be imagined.

In such circumstances every manufacturer, if still solvent, was very short of money and had not the least intention of giving any quarter whatever to the Unions which disputed his mastership and which had now for more than a generation interfered constantly in the conduct of what he considered to be his own private affairs, e.g. the wages he should pay and the hours his men should work. Consequently every old dispute broke out again. Not only were wages lowered everywhere, but concessions as to hours and overtime given when Labour was strong, were all withdrawn now that it was weak.

The Unions fought desperately against every reduction of wages and all overtime. It was one of the worst results of Industrial depression at this period that every one blamed every one else for his own sufferings. Disasters which hit masters as well as men did not cause workers to offer help or submit to loss. The ethics of Trade Unions were to force as much as their strength could compel Employers to give them in good times, and to resist stubbornly cuts of any sort when times were bad. The Employers, they had found in past years, had always used their powers to keep wages as low as possible, no matter how good trade might be. Why, therefore, should they, the mere workmen—whose business, they were told, was to labour and do what they were told, and not to think—trouble their heads about the Employer's side and give him any assistance

whatever to improve his business or to develop the industry which was his concern alone?

This was the creed of the Unions. Narrow—certainly; stupid, even. But it had been taught them in season and out of season by the Masters.

Therefore when Industry as a whole fell into the trough of the wave in 1879, and master and man alike suffered loss, hardship, and in many cases ruin, there was no drawing together in misfortune. The conflict between them became more ruthless and bitter than it had ever been before. This bitterness in its turn, coming after years of prosperity which most people in Industry thought would last for ever, laid the foundation for a more deeply-rooted "class consciousness" on either side than had been known previously, and a sharply divided point of view upon a vital question.

The Employers had declared from the beginning that the rigid insistence by Labour of a static minimum return from Industry in wages, and which the stronger Unions had compelled manufacturers to concede, was an economic absurdity. Wages, they held, like all other costs of production, should be kept as low as possible in the interests of the trade of the country, and when times were bad must go down to any figure the consequent reduction in prices required. The Trade Unions, though, when the market price was rising, quite willing to place rates of wages on a sliding scale with prices, were appalled at the results of such an arrangement when the prices tumbled down and the wages, even of a mechanic, fell to a mere pittance.

What was the alternative? Clearly, from the Workers' point of view, means must be found to secure a static minimum wage for Labour in any and all circumstances. They argued that while Employers might suffer loss when trade slackened they had, or should have if they were prudent men, reserve funds to fall back upon to

maintain themselves until things improved, and to keep their factories open. Workers, on the contrary, only received at the best of times a profit from their labours which just enabled them to live and to provide, through their Societies, for sickness and old age. They had no reserve funds to fall back upon in extended unemployment. Therefore they should, in justice, be secured out of the proceeds of Industry a competence in times of trade depression.

This argument is largely accepted in principle to-day, and, in practice, an attempt has been made to meet it by the Insurance Act against Unemployment. In the 'seventies and 'eighties it was not dreamed of by Employers. It would have been sneered at as grossly "humanitarian": as something which would demoralize workpeople more than the out-relief doles of the old Poor Law.

This period of stagnation of trade and industrial conflict, with its crushing effect upon Trade Union organization, has been likened to the terrible days of 1834 with their after-effects of Chartism. The comparison has point. How far the actual suffering and misery of workers in the 'seventies and 'eighties was greater, or less, than that of the poor forty years before, we cannot tell. We do know, however, that the result of it was an outburst of discontent, as before, with the system both of Industry and Society which permitted one class, and that the largest numerically in the country, to suffer when trade was bad, in a way that was out of all proportion to any hardships and discomforts endured by other classes. But the form which the discontent and bitterness against the social system took in the 'sixties was so different, and met with such different results from that of the older time, that it would appear useless to press the comparison further, except as a lesson and warning that upheavals *must* come when the machinery of the life of the people goes wrong. We

need that lesson and warning to-day in our struggle with the aftermath of the War.

The result of the upheavals in Industry caused by the disasters in trade in the 'seventies was quite different from that of former times because the mental outlook, experience and capacity of the majority of Workmen, especially in the organized trades, had grown beyond knowledge.

There were idealists still who might have followed Robert Owen in his Co-operative Commonwealth, but there were not many of them. The majority of thinking leaders of the younger generation of Workmen in the 'seventies and 'eighties had graduated in a hard material school. They had been administrators in Trade Union organization and finance, and had studied, often with very fatal effect, the strictly commercial and severely practical outlook and ideas of the Manufacturers they served. They had, moreover, taken part in political life and were keen free-traders, and had believed wholeheartedly in the principle of peasant-proprietorship in France; and that every man, if justice were done in the world, should have his individual share, however small, in the ownership of the property of a country. They now saw that in spite of better education for the masses, cheaper food and clothes and recreation, Industry allowed no scope at all for the bulk of men of their class to rise in the social scale or to acquire any means by which they might be emancipated from a life of intense, monotonous, never-ending toil, for which they only received, in comparison with members of other classes, a very small return. On the other hand, they saw comfort and luxury abounding in the homes and lives of people in those classes who did not work as hard as they—the labouring people. And they asked: Why? To this question they proceeded to find answers.

The first answer was that Trade Unionism, as they

had known it since it became an institution, was not going to raise the standard of life of its members under any circumstances, even in times of good trade, except of the highest grades of skilled men. In bad times it could not even do that. They saw also that Trade Unions were entering into a very critical stage of growth. Iron ships, for instance, were taking the place of wooden ships, and the relative positions of Ironworkers and Shipwrights, therefore, were causing trouble and even friction among the Unions in those trades. The same thing was going on, more or less, in every industry, as new machinery and new processes and the exploitation of new materials for manufacture developed and multiplied.

Such difficulties weakened, and would always weaken, the power of Labour to act together against the Employers who, since Trade Unions had reached power, were now arrayed against them, not merely trade by trade, but as a class.

The next point was the Employers. They were, Labour thought, the main cause of the injustice of the social system, and therefore no hope was to be found in them. The more far-seeing and enlightened Captains in Industry might recognize now that Labour was not a mob of ignorant, unlettered persons, to be driven about and beaten into submission by force, as they once thought it was. But the argument put by the Employers who frankly met leaders of the men, was sufficiently disheartening to progressive ideals.

Labour, these Employers admitted, should receive a just return for its economic value in Industry. But this economic value was strictly limited to the prices obtainable in the markets for the goods which were produced by labour. Furthermore, now that machinery could perform tasks much more cheaply and much more quickly than hand labour, in an increasing number of

ways, the value of the human factor in production would tend to grow less, unless there was production upon an enormously increased scale. Such production, Employers believed, would solve the problem if—and this was the point—Labour relinquished all limitations in regard to overtime and scrapped all standards of wage-rates, allowing such variation in remuneration to take place as market prices for the goods produced should dictate.

This argument, naturally, did not appeal at all to the younger Trade Unionists. It placed Labour, in their judgment, utterly at the mercy of the classes who possessed material wealth. They had experienced in the past, and were bitterly feeling in the present, the working of economic law which, before their eyes, enriched every class but their own. It was no use, from their point of view, for the comfortable gentlemen in black coats, living in great houses and providing fortunes for idle sons to spend, to declare that employment of labour depended upon developments of markets for produce, and development of markets upon cheap production and cheap production upon cheap labour, when cheap labour meant, to the manual worker, permanent segregation from all opportunity to live a life worth living in the best of times, and destitution in lean years.

The young Trade Unionist of the 'eighties, confronted with the inability of his own forces to change the Industrial system, and more convinced than ever after exploring the Employers' point of view, that this system was unjust and hopelessly bad from his own standpoint, set about a course of thinking on his own account. This led him to the conclusion that, in theory at least, the Revolutionaries in France in 1789 were right. No way of materially improving the conditions under which the labouring population of this, or any other country, had to live, existed but the one of taking possession by force of numbers and political organization of the means of

production and distribution called Capital, which apparently ruled and organized Industry. The present "Capitalists" were masters of the situation, he decided, and, whether bad or good individually, as such kept all manual workers in hopeless subjection, and, as far as the majority went, in actual penury. The power of these Capitalists must be taken from them. The people must rise in their might, and, like Samson—but with more discretion and discrimination—bring the temple down upon their heads.

It was not, however, the intention of those who reasoned in this way, to follow the example of the French a century ago and preach or practice Revolution by force. That, they saw clearly—being men of common sense—would be to follow literally Samson's example, and suffer the consequences he suffered. They took another course altogether and simply set to work to build up in the minds of all men and women, irrespective of station and class, the conviction that Industry to be conducted for private gain and profit was to ruin not only the poor labourer, but all other classes as well, except the few who grew rich upon the system; and that the remedy was to be found in the steady growth and development of intervention by the State in all matters pertaining to property and the possession of Capital for Industrial purposes, until, in the end, the direction and organization of such property and capital would be directly in the hands of the representatives of the People as a whole—through Parliament.

This idea, which has become known as Socialism, though it has been at work under a number of other titles, first took its station and degree in Trade Unionism in the days of the great depression in trade in the latter half of the 'seventies. It had been at work, of course, before Chartism. It was no new idea even then. But in 1881 to 1883 it was reorganized upon a basis

which has lasted, with various developments and changes, until the present day. Indeed it is now almost as much an institution as Trade Unionism itself. And the reason for this, upon which too much stress cannot be laid, was the hopeless outlook for the intelligent artisan class—as apart from the poor, unorganized, illiterate people in the lower ranks of labour—in the Industrial future.

Socialism is not, as many opponents believe, the creation of middle-class theorists and "arm-chair" intellectuals. Such men, and women, have embraced it, and thoughtful persons of all classes, who see with intense clearness the impossibility of a great under-world of men and women living stunted, colourless, laborious lives, remaining content under modern conditions of society with such a fate, have accepted some of its principles.

But the root of the vitality and growth of modern Socialism, which has caused more changes and upheavals and even revolution itself in this country than any other during the last fifty years, lay in the severe check given to purely Trade-Union development in 1875 and onwards, by the crash in trade and a return of Labour to an outlook of despair.

Chapter XIX — *The Awakening*

SOCIALISTIC, or any other, theories of reconstructing Society to check accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few and force them to share with the many, are not the subject-matter of this book. It is with the Strike, and all that this weapon means for good or evil, that we are more particularly concerned. Therefore in our review of the years which followed the outburst of every kind of struggle and dispute, with stoppage of Industrial activity and restraint of trade consequent upon the bad years in the early 'eighties, we need say little of the political creed of Collectivism which grew and consolidated its position as time passed.

Nevertheless, growth of political reasoning among all sections of Trade Unionists and their non-Unionist brethren, has had so profound an effect upon Strikes of later years, and has, in its turn, been so strongly influenced by Strikes, that we cannot ignore it.

A Strike is, after all, a method, however rude and incomplete, by which the manual worker expresses his rebellion against some phase or action incidental to the present industrial system. The very inconsequence of large numbers of Strikes, and the proof which has been given again and again by statisticians that they are wasteful and ruinous, and even when successful for the moment, very rarely " pay " in any sense whatever, tends to show that they are as real an expression of social unrest as of an industrial revolt.

The cause of Strikes is, we assert, at the root, social, not industrial; just as the root-cause of Trade Unionism, while partly owing to the need of brotherhood and therefore social also, is mainly industrial, having as its motive the combination of individuals on an organized basis to resist industrial force from Employers, and to exert pressure upon them to give a better return for industrial service.

The course of events in regard to Labour in the 'eighties, when the results of the terrible depression of trade upon the poorer classes began to force themselves upon public attention, was of great social significance.

The ideas of the French Revolution of 1789 and of French Syndicalism of modern times, began to grip men who now felt intensely the cruelty to their class of the industrial system. The facts warranted this passionate feeling of revolt. But they never warranted, in this country, action approaching that of the "Sans-Culottes" or the Sabotage of the Syndicalists, and no such action was attempted by the British worker. For no sooner did the British Public realize what was happening than it began to sit up and take notice. The great Trade Unions, whose unemployed members were now acute sufferers, after years of regular work and steady income, made a great impression upon the Public by describing forcibly, yet in measured language, the position of affairs, as they saw it, and accentuating social contrasts from their point of view:

"There are to be seen thousands of idle men vainly seeking for an honest day's work," says the Boiler Makers' Annual Report for 1886; "the privation that has been endured by them, their wives and children, is terrible to contemplate. . . . Hide it, cover it up as we may, there is a depth of grief and trouble the full revelation of which, we believe, cannot be indefinitely postponed. The workman may be ignorant of science and the arts . . . but he is not blind. . . . He sees the lavish display of wealth in which he has no part. He sees a large and growing class enjoying

unlimited abundance. He sees miles of costly residences, each occupied by fewer people than are crowded into single rooms of the tenement in which he lives. He cannot fail to reason that there must be something wrong in a system which affects such unequal distribution of the wealth created by Labour."

"The Workmen of England," declared James Maudesley, a Lancashire Cotton Spinner and afterwards a Conservative Member of Parliament, in 1886, at an International Trades Union Congress, "possessed one clear conception: they realized that the actual producers did not obtain their share of the wealth they created."

The Union of Flint Glass Makers said:

"It is very hard for Employers to attempt to force men into systems by which they cannot earn an honourable living. These unjust attempts to grind down the working man will not be tolerated much longer, for revolutionary changes are beginning to show themselves, and important matters affecting the industrial classes will shortly come to the front. Why, for example, should Lord Dudley inherit coal-mines and land producing £1,000 a day, while his colliers have to slave all the week and cannot get a living?"

In this last sentence the real nail was struck on the head from the Labour point of view. Also, in the insistence by all the speakers that Labour produced wealth and received no share of it. And, be it remembered, these men were representatives of "aristocratic" Labour.

The general public took little account of these comments on the division of wealth. It had no clear ideas of economics and did not want to have them. But its heart went out to the sufferings of the unemployed. The point of view of Employers did not impress it either. They, though equally concerned for the distress of their workpeople, saw no way out of the impasse because, they said, employment of labour depended upon demand, and wages upon prices, and if prices fell, wages must fall too; and if there were no demand—

Well !—how could there be employment ? Logic incontrovertible. A question of mere simple arithmetic to them, the answer to which, they felt, quite sincerely, must be obvious to every reasonable human being—even to the unemployed themselves, if they thought the problem out.

But human nature is not logical when it feels things—especially when it sees helpless suffering and want among women and children. Industry, as we have said before, is not arithmetic : it is human—and alive. The Public got restive and the Government began to move : very slowly, to be sure, and only by appointing Commissions of Enquiry. But it moved. Private persons did likewise. The well-known books of Charles Booth—an employer himself in early life, and representative of a great family of employers—which were published in 1889 to 1893, created a sensation, the greater because it was neither impulsive nor declamatory, and aroused deep feeling among all thoughtful persons, no matter what their political views might be.

We remember Charles Booth well, and took some personal part in his investigations.

Mr. Booth had a quiet, shrewd and rather taciturn personality. Nothing but facts interested him in the least, but in the collection of such facts no detail escaped his observation. He had warm sympathies, coupled with the discernment and sense of order of a trained business mind and the inborn instinct of a tireless investigator of causes as well as of surface facts. By publishing his Enquiry into the conditions under which great masses of working people lived, and showing that in London alone there were, in many districts, sixty per cent. of people whose lives from babyhood to old age were a standing reproach and shame to any civilized country, Mr. Booth opened the eyes of the "governing classes"

to the seamy side of free England as they had never been opened before to how far the purely individualistic creed of its statesmen and politicians fell short in meeting the claims, not of "humanitarians" but of humanity.

The immediate results were not striking because the alternative propositions put forward by Socialists for the re-creation of Society, and especially Industry, upon a new basis altogether, took no hold, even of the masses of Industrial workers. The conservatism of the British working-man is, of course, proverbial; and has consistently dashed the hopes of innumerable agitators of every generation, not excluding our own. But it was more than this which checked any approach to a concerted attempt to revolutionize the government of the country, or any determination to dispossess by force even the offensive plutocrat who had fattened upon sweated labour of his ill-gotten gains. It was the common sense of labouring people, and their instinctive appreciation of basic economic laws.

Just how, they asked, would working chaps make a living if there were no men of business about pushing trade, and seeing to the markets, and getting contracts and doing all that part of industrial organization about which no labour-leader or professional man, be his cleverness in writing about the blessing of State-control and Collectivism ever so wonderful, knew anything at all? And if these business chaps were not to have the personal incentive to take risks and assume responsibilities and use their trained minds and wits to the best advantage for themselves and their own families, would they push trade, and risk their money and other people's in setting up works and factories, and provide what workers needed in the way of employment? Not much they wouldn't—nor would working men themselves, if they took on the job.

We were constantly in touch with working men of

all classes and more especially the rougher sort, in those days; and what impressed us more than any other fact was that their very conviction that Employers and commercial men as a class thought of nothing but money, and business, and how to "split a farthing," caused them to believe that bad as things were in the country for Labour, they would be worse if the business of the Nation were to be placed in the hands of amateurs at the work.

There was another reason why Socialization of Industry and Nationalization of Land, though it aroused wonderful enthusiasm in theory when preached to a crowd of hungry, unemployed men or discussed at Meetings of the Trade Union Congress, made few real converts in practice at that time among those who had experience either of the effects of Trade Union or Friendly Society organization. Workmen in the 'eighties had tasted the fruits of personal thrift and individual responsibility, and had seen, day by day, the results of dependence by careless neighbours upon the help of others, whether by charity, doles, or out-relief from the Poor-Law. In a small way a very considerable number were "Capitalists" themselves. The old story, much relished by working men of that day, of the effect of a Socialist orator's declaration that, if the rich were dispossessed, every man at his meeting would have Sixty pounds in his pocket, though probably apocryphal, is worth repeating, because it is significant of much. The audience —the story went—cheered the announcement lustily. But one man rose up and put on his cap with a gesture of entire disillusionment.

"Only Sixty pounds!" he exclaimed. "Why, I have sixty-one pound in the Post Office myself—I'm off!"

There were, in the poorest neighbourhoods, hundreds and thousands of workmen earning very slender wages

who, through their Societies and by exercising private initiative of all kinds, not only kept their heads above water, but educated their children and made provisions for sickness and old age. These men, when they thought over economic problems, were as much puzzled as any "middle-class individualist," or any anxious Employer worried by close competition from abroad or the unreasonableness of Trade Union restrictions in output, to find a just and practical solution of the problem of improving Labour conditions without destroying the basis of industrial stability.

Working men in fact, in those days, understood quite as much as other people that character, natural cleverness, hard work, and knowledge of the science of commerce and finance, were the prime factors in the accumulation of wealth by Employers and commercial men generally. No change of social system, they felt, could take away the need of such qualities, and any system which discouraged the use of them would do more harm than good.

Therefore it was that while, with increasing education and the wider knowledge of what other people enjoyed, manual workers felt more and more that their world was out of joint, they had sufficient knowledge of the intricacies of trade and modern business to prove very hard material for Socialistic idealists to work upon.

Nevertheless, Socialism as a means of teaching workers, and other people, to be dissatisfied, took strong root in those days, and as its exponents had the shrewdness, as a rule, not to preach, far less to practise, revolutionary doctrines, or to force to the front any violent political upheaval, they made headway, and began to cause a great many members of the general public most furiously to think.

The fundamental basis of Socialism—that the Community as a whole must accept direct responsibility

for the social and moral conditions of the festering slum, and the bleak, joyless life of even the "respectable" poverty-stricken thousands in the East End of London, and all men and women below Booth's "poverty line" —was taken up and preached eloquently by practical minded economists and social reformers who abominated Nationalization of the means of Production. Men and women of leisure and wealth, quite unconnected with the Fabian Society, began to spend laborious days of more than nine hours, week in, week out, among the poor. Not as lady-bountifuls or patrons of fashionable charities, but as friends and helpers of denizens of poor neighbourhoods in times of trouble. It was such people who by unstinted personal service gave Charles Booth's books their value and inspired him to write plainly upon the facts they placed before him. It was the knowledge which such men and women conveyed individually, and by means of Reports issued by innumerable Societies to which they belonged, among the "comfortable" classes, which prepared the general public for social changes and appreciation of Trade Unionism which would have struck friends of the workers in former times such as Francis Place dumb with amazement. The "Socialist Indictment of the Capitalist System," though it fired the imagination of the restless, angry leaders of Workers' organizations, and, it is not to be denied, inspired such sturdy, virile friends of Labour as John Burns and his colleagues of the "Social Democratic Federation," would have had little real effect in changing conditions of life for the lower ranks of workers had it not been for the unremitting toil and sustained practical sympathy with all who lived by manual work, in the dreary wastes of working-class streets, of people, who, in theory, detested Collectivism, and looked upon political Socialism as the most demoralizing influence of the day.

Thus, steadily and surely, however imperceptibly, forces were at work in the 'eighties and early 'nineties which were, in effect, a "Strike" of men of all ranks and all kinds of political and social opinions against the selfish side of the *laissez-faire* doctrine which had permeated society for so many generations.

But the solution of such a problem could not be approached merely by the slow inoculation of the community for the need of social reform. Outbursts more or less were inevitable seeing what the condition was of low-paid labour in bad times and seasons. The "Aristocratic" Trade Unions who stood for orderliness and moderation in action were, in the 'eighties, quite helpless to discipline or direct any agitation among "unskilled" Labour. The Wharf and Dock Labourers and transport workers generally, Carmen, Gas-workers, and the whole of the rough labour in the Building Trade, were as much outside the select circles of those men who governed the Engineers, the Flint-Glass Makers and the like, as these leaders were outside the men of the professional classes. How could a "casual" at the Docks, with an average of three days' work a week all the year round at 5*s*. a day, and often less, with young children to keep, afford the ordinary 1*s*. weekly contribution of a high-class Union, even if the "conservative" members of the "Craft" Societies would have looked at him—which they certainly would not?

The old and long-established policy of these Unions of only admitting men who were to be counted upon to be substantial contributors to Amalgamated Funds, had never made for Democracy in Labour. It now created a "New Unionism" altogether. For, in these times, the rough labourer was no longer a man without ideals, or the ability to render an account of his citizenship. This was realized by many capable men earnestly

determined to find a way towards radical Social Reform. The chief among these was John Burns. Mr. Burns was an Engineer himself by trade, but his sympathies were as broad as his shoulders, and early in life he made himself champion of all under-dogs. He gave voice to the bitter feeling the general worker cherished towards the labour "Aristocrat."

"The great bulk of our labourers," he wrote in 1885, "are ignored by the skilled worker. It is this selfish, snobbish desertion by the higher grades of the lower, that makes success in many disputes impossible. Ostracized by their fellows, a spirit of revenge alone often prompts men to oppose or remain indifferent to Unionism, when if the Unions were wiser and more conciliatory, support could have been forthcoming where now jealousy and discontent prevail.

But such wisdom was not to be, and so Burns, and others with him, struck out on their own account, and adopted Socialism as their Creed for the betterment of their class.

But Burns was then, as always, a practical man, and incidentally a particularly brave one. He told the Unemployed in 1885 and 1886 to make themselves felt and heard, but he never incited them to break other people's heads, and when the police intervened it was John Burns himself who dealt most faithfully with them, and suffered six weeks' imprisonment accordingly. This was on November 13th, 1887, "Bloody Sunday," in Trafalgar Square. Another well-known man shared the same fate—John Ward. Rough times those, but how different from the days of Peterloo and the Chartist riots. In the winter of 1885 the cry of the unemployed in the Metropolis caused £60,000, or more, to be raised on their behalf in a few weeks, by the Lord Mayor of London. About the methods adopted for distribution of this Fund the less said the better. The Mansion House was not guarded then,

as it is now, by men who understand the evil that can be done by an impulse of compassion translated into mere cash. Each Metropolitan Vestry—for this was before the days of Borough Councils—was told to get a Committee together somehow, and at once to make such inquiries into the bona-fides of applicants for relief as it fancied, and to give money—which would be sent to the Committee in one big cheque—as it thought fit. Chaos resulted, and in most places waste and muddle was the order of the day. In certain localities raids upon the Town Halls took place, and in one instance the mob broke through, and departed with a handsome sum. But there was no real panic on the part of the public, either then or later, as some Socialist writers alleged.

We happened to be working among the very poor in Shoreditch at the time—a neighbourhood considered to be the most criminal part of the Metropolis. There, as elsewhere, arrangements for dealing with relief of the Unemployed were crude and inadequate to the last degree. Worst of all, it was decreed that all persons armed with Certificates of Character—save the mark! —from "Local Committees" were to assemble in a yard outside the Town Hall every afternoon. It was our responsibility to marshal the crowd of these Certificate holders, and usher them into the Committee Room to receive their relief. The experience will never be forgotten, and as it has a direct bearing upon our subject we will give it briefly.

The first day, a wet, bitterly cold February afternoon, two hundred assembled. There were ragged women and cripples; sturdy navvies and builders' labourers; cabinet-makers and French polishers and frozen-out costers. All were impatient, and, as they had to wait, groaned heartily and ominously under the windows. Most of the Committee inside fled at

the sound, and were seen no more. But one or two remained at their post and took the bold course of mingling freely with the crowd and explaining the cause of delay. The result was an exchange of friendly chaff; an arrangement for all women and crippled men to be served first, and cheerful patience on the part of the rest until their time came.

It was then resolved that no police protection should be asked for the Town Hall; but that a few volunteers, selected from hefty labourers in the crowd, should be asked to serve as special-constables and regulators of relief traffic. There were six of these men, and most faithfully and honourably they did their duty day after day for six days, at 1*s.* an afternoon. But this did not suit the "corner-boys" and other inhabitants of Hoxton, when they heard of the successful raid of a Town Hall in the West End. And on the last day of all a rough and organized crowd, knowing that there were no police on guard, broke into the yard, and, forcing their way to the door of the Relief Rooms, demanded admittance and all the money the Committee possessed. The situation was somewhat strained. The sole guardians of the Peace and the money were the six labouring-men volunteers. But it happened that the member of Committee in charge was accustomed to rougher and more dangerous crowds than were to be found even in Hoxton in 1886. He saw that the aggressors were obviously a gang only, and that the steps on which they had gathered outside the bolted door of the Town Hall, were very steep and very slippery. Above them, jammed against the door, were the six volunteers and himself. A whisper to his men, asking whether they would stand by the Committee, a curt nod of assurance from them in reply, an order from him to follow an example he would give —which they received with grins—and he took action.

The leader of the mob, meantime, was concluding an eloquent, if brief, Socialistic address from the pillar at the top of the steps.

"This 'ere money inside," he said, "is yours—stole from ye by the Capitalists. Take it—and take it now." (Loud cheers.)

He stepped down from his rostrum smiling, to find himself grasped firmly by the coat collar and the slack of his trousers by the Committee man. The next moment he was swung off his feet, and hurled spread-eagle wise upon his friends below. On the instant six more gentlemen were swung swiftly after him, by the Volunteer "specials," propelled the faster, we regret to relate, by their boots. Now, men who lose their balance cling to others to save themselves. Result —some eighteen of the leaders of the gang fell sprawling in a heap before the crowd at the foot of the steps. There was a moment of tense silence, and then from the back of the yard there came a roar of delighted laughter. On the instant the Committee-man, followed by the volunteers, ran down the steps, picked up their men, and, asking for room, ran them incontinently down the yard and dumped them into the thoroughfare and mud of Old Street.

Upon their return to face the "fury of the mob" they were received with joyous and hilarious cheers —in which even the members of the gang (who were not hurt) joined with the utmost goodwill. There was no raid upon that Town Hall.

The piquancy of the incident was heightened by the discovery afterwards that the most active and reliable volunteer of all was a well-known cracksman, who had served more than one sentence of penal servitude for burglary.

This adventure has its serious side, which we would impress upon our readers.

These volunteers received no material reward for their conduct, and asked for none. The man they served was of the "middle-class" and unknown to them even by name. What was it, then, which made those labourers and that burglar, guardians of the peace and representatives of law and order, in opposition to and despite of their own class, and, socially, their own kith and kin? It was just the sympathy of man to man, and the comradeship which never fails to obliterate all class distinctions when men are brought together to carry out, by mutual aid, a common purpose which they can understand.

From that day forth the member of the Unemployed Relief Committee of 1886 has carried this lesson in his heart, and never once, after nearly forty years of constant association with men of every class, has he ever found it fail.

Chapter XX — *A Revolutionary Programme*

THE fund raised for the Unemployed in London in 1886 was a small incident, but it was a sign of the times, as employers of badly-paid labour were soon to discover.

The public conscience was becoming gradually but thoroughly aroused to a sense of responsibility towards the men and women who, under present social and industrial conditions, had never a chance in life. Call it Socialism or by any other name you please, there was undoubtedly in every great city a new spirit arising among the well-to-do in their attitude and their conduct towards their "submerged" neighbours. The rise and development of the Salvation Army was one sign of this.

The little bands of white-faced men in clumsy uniforms with their "lasses" in poke bonnets struggling, and praying, round public-houses and the worst haunts of vice and misery; laughed at, jostled and mishandled by corner-boys and roughs, have emerged in these days into a smartly equipped Army Corps, with a very large and elaborate organization, and men at the head of it who soon became responsible for hundreds and thousands of pounds.

It was not religious fervour which produced this money. Religion among the Salvationists themselves was of a very earnest, indeed fanatical character—more so than anyone who has not closely studied the inner workings

of the Army has any idea. But its religion did not make the Army rich ; it was its all-embracing bold and determined programme for the social redemption of the "submerged tenth"—the under-dogs of life. *Darkest England*, by "General" Booth, and a score of lesser works, published and distributed broadcast in those days, were to be found in the most surprising places. And owing to the Army, as well as to such bodies as the Charity Organization Society with its watchword of "Not alms, but a friend," men and women of all ranks, and even Royalty, began to make a definite and personal endeavour to "do something for the poor," apart altogether from charitable relief.

The importance of all this interest, much of which, it must be confessed, was merely sentimental, and the frivolous following of a fashionable lead, lies not in what it accomplished by practical work—though it accomplished much—but in the change of thought and attitude it denoted among the "classes" towards social problems and the industrial conditions of the poor.

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, commenting upon the awakening of Society in these years, in their *History of Trade Unionism*, naturally and quite justifiably claim that "Socialist Organizations," with which, as we know, they had themselves so much to do, took a very active part in this awakening. These Organizations, however, did what others did not, and sent out speakers into all the great Industrial Centres. There—University Graduates, stalwart Miners and candidates for Parliament on the extreme left of the Radical wing "stirred up a vague but effective unrest in all except the official circle of the Trade Union world."

The effect of this teaching was to give to the masses of industrial workers, as Robert Owen did in the thirties, a hope that by united action in the political arena they might create a new and better industrial system in

which they, themselves, would have a commanding position. In their *History of Trade Unionism* Mr. and Mrs. Webb comment with obvious pleasure (p. 387) on the "optimistic confidence with which Socialists of these years declared that under a system of Collective Ownership the Workers would not only be ensured at all times a competent livelihood, but would themselves control the administration of the Surplus wealth of the Nation." The authors, however, are careful not to commit themselves to the "validity" of this optimism.

All the same, such teachings had considerable effect, if only in giving a positive turn to the restless discontent of the half-educated, newly-enfranchised folk, who were ready to seize upon anything constructive, however vague, which promised to "ensure them a competent livelihood."

The strength and success of any teaching lies far more in the psychological receptiveness of the pupil than in the weight of the teacher, or even in the truth of the lesson, and never were the people more ready to imbibe the doctrine of collective action and collective owership of property and power. Moreover, these teachers were by no means the Utopian theorists their opponents, particularly the employers of labour—who saw red at the very name of Webb or Fabian Society—scoffingly declared. Not a bit of it.

While they described with great eloquence and much "corroborative detail" the advantages (for everybody) of a Collective State which should eliminate competition in business, and institute a "Co-operative Commonwealth" in all departments of industrial and social life, they plainly and definitely advised their converts to begin quietly, and at the small end, by a combined and determined agitation for an eight-hour day.

Here the Socialists were on very safe ground. We have heard many an Employer in 1887 and the years

following, say that he had found eight hours of concentrated labour by his workmen far more productive from his own point of view than the long ten or twelve hour shifts many manufacturers believed in as devoutly as they believed in the British Constitution. Besides this insistence upon practical and immediate ameliorations of Labour's lot, which would not in the least uproot the present system of Society, it was the right note to play for the General Public, and evoked whole-hearted support from the hard-fisted agitators and labour-leaders. Even the conservative Trade Union "Aristocrats," after many conferences, pushed hard by their younger and progressive rank-and-file members, turned an approving eye to the innovation, and by the nineties an eight-hour day had become part of the programme of the Trade Union Congress.

But mild as this object may seem to us now, and though many have sneered at the boastings by Socialists of success on this point, after their exordiums to workers to insist upon securing Collectivist State Control, this concentration upon a statutory limitation of a working day was a real end of a wedge—however thin.

For underlying it was a main Socialist principle that "industry was made for man, not man for industry," and that no matter what happened to profits, the human needs of the workers for more leisure and less fatigue, must come first, and *Employers be compelled by law to provide for it.*

Consequently when the Trade Union Congress adopted the principle, Socialists asserted that they had converted Trade Unions to Socialistic ideals. That by their agitation among workmen and insistence upon stigmatizing as selfish greed the opposition to a legal eight-hour day by Employers, they were strengthening the stone wall of separation between class and class in Industry, troubled them not in the least. It was part of their

creed that Employers would yield nothing to Labour except by force. As we heard Herbert Burroughs say about this time to a meeting of Social Workers at Toynbee Hall, "Half of Society robs the other half, and you, sitting here, are robbers—every one of you!"

The next point taken up by the Socialists was an equally practical and burning subject—"Fair Wages." Here again, the arguments adduced were the prime necessity for men and women who laboured to receive a "living wage," let the emergencies of trade in which they were engaged be what they might. And, again, all questions of overturning the social and industrial system of private ownership were set on one side. The immediate result was greater than the most sanguine Socialist of the time expected.

The lucifer-match trade bore a very evil reputation. The principal employees were girls. Their hours were very long, their wages very low, and their work was often injurious to health. In 1888, suddenly, without any kind of preparation, 672 of these girls came out on strike. They had no funds and no organization of any kind, but they had friends among the Socialist leaders, and their case obtained at once enormous publicity. The facts were patent and the Public rose. Funds were subscribed for their support; the papers published the facts, and in two weeks concessions were wisely made by the great firms involved, and the girls went back to work —victorious.

A year later, August, 1889, the Labourers and Stokers employed in Gas Works formed a Union for fighting purposes, organized by Tom Mann, Will Thorne and John Burns himself. The hours of the men were at that time twelve per day. They demanded reduction to eight and—appealed to public opinion for support. They did not strike, but left the matter to the consideration of the Gas Companies. Again the social instinct

of the Community, and, this time, of the Employers themselves, won the Workers' battle. The companies not only acceded to the demand, but even accompanied their concession by an increase of wages to their men.

At the same time an agitation which had been going on for two years among Dock Labourers drew to a head, and on the 12th of August, 1889, the whole of the Labourers on the North side of the Thames had struck for 6*d.* an hour instead of 5*d.*; abolition of sub-contract and piece-work ; extra pay for overtime and a minimum engagement of four hours.

Ben Tillett was then the leader of a Union of these men; but it was a very small affair, and so poor that it could not provide Strike funds even for a week. The position of the Dock Labourer, however, was so miserable and so unmistakably beneath any possibility of redemption under the prevailing system, that again the Public took a hand. The Press rang with the wrongs of the casual docker fighting day by day for a few hours or even one hour—at 5*d.*—of work. Subscriptions poured in. The trade of the Port of London was paralysed, and the Dock Companies found that the importation of Foreign Labour would bring down upon them opprobrium which could not be faced. The Stevedores, though in regular work and better paid, joined in. John Burns took command.

He received £48,726 by public subscription. The sympathy with the Dockers' case was world-wide—£30,000 being sent from Australia by telegraph. In the end, mediation was attempted successfully, and most of the demands of the men were met.

The immediate result of the Strike was the rapid growth of Trade Unions composed mostly of unskilled workmen all over the country. Among those which grew in this year from small beginnings were the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, under the vigorous leader-

ship of Mr. J. Havelock Wilson; the General Railway Workers' Union—afterwards to develop into the National Union of Railwaymen; Societies of Dockers in Liverpool and at the Tyne side; and, of course, the National Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers.

This uprising of unskilled men was marked by one general feature. They accumulated at first no funds for any purpose but to provide the wherewithal for Strikes. They frankly intended, in the words of the General Railway Workers' Union, "that the Union shall remain a fighting one, and shall not be encumbered with any sick or accident fund." The General Secretary of the Gas Workers and General Labourers put it: "It is true that we have only one benefit attached, and that is Srtike-pay. I do not believe in having sick-pay, out-of-work pay, and a number of other pays . . . the whole aim and intention of the Union is to reduce the hours of Labour and reduce Sunday work."

This uprising of combination among Labourers had its effect upon Trade Unionism everywhere. The Craft Unions more than doubled, and in some cases trebled, their membership. Even the Agricultural Labourers, the Cinderella of the Labour Movement, became in 1892 17,000 strong.

Needless to say, the complexion of the Trade Union Congress, which contained representatives of all Unions, changed under this expansion. It had been governed by the men who believed in a cautious policy of purely industrial character, and the concentration of attention upon strengthening the financial position of Societies of Workmen so as to enable all their members to provide individually for unemployment, sickness and old age. While these men believed in Labour holding itself apart and distinct from members of other classes, they strove to enable it to do so on the individualistic basis of each worker preserving his self-independence, and by such

independence, raising the moral and political tone of his class, and acquiring respect and fair treatment from Employers by the steadiness of his work and the dignity of his conduct, and his general reliability.

These old Trade Unionists were first-rate men. Their code of honour was very high, and it was they who made all Employers, except those too old-fashioned to learn anything, recognize the substantial worth to Industry of Trade Unionism as a stable and moderating influence in all Labour Councils. But, like so many of the Employers themselves, and all men who entrench their lives and outlook in habit and custom, they failed to understand that since their system did not and could not meet the aspirations of the millions of Labourers and Workmen outside Craft-organization, they could not expect to hold the reins of government over Labour as a whole.

So, in the days of rapid transition which followed the public desire to take a hand in dealing with Industrial affairs, the old-fashioned Trade Unionist leaders found themselves bereft of much of their authority, and faced with a great advancing tide of young, and new, blood, which poured over all barriers and took possession aggressively, as young blood does, of the powers hitherto held by the "Aristocrats" of Labour.

Another revolution was therefore in progress—a revolution in Labour itself. The effects had yet to be seen. There was pandemonium for a time. The Unskilled Labourers' Unions, flushed with their mighty victories, which they innocently attributed solely to their own valour and power—forgetting altogether the part played by the Public—treated all old-fashioned ideas of laying by funds for rainy days with contumely. They, the Labourers, were the real force of the People,—the Workers' St. George—now about to kill the Dragon of penurious, money-grubbing Employers and Capitalistic

Companies. The very sympathy they had received from the General Public, and which had so powerfully aided their cause, they put down to the power of their Socialistic friends in the middle-classes. They enormously exaggerated the power of these "intellectuals" and believed that they held the Press of the Country in their power. There was a conviction, indeed, in many quarters, that a sudden, though probably peaceful social revolution was imminent. Mr. H. Hyndman had sprung into power in the Social Democratic Federation, and as far back as 1885 he had voiced what, after the strikes of 1889, the younger workmen felt certain was to be.

"Revolution," he said, "is now ripe and ready. Nothing short of a revolution which shall place the producers of wealth (labour) in control of their own country, can possibly change matters for the better. Will it be peaceful? . . . We hope it may."

"Let our mission be," he wrote in 1889, "to help to band together the workers of the world for the great Class struggle against their exploiters."

He remarked significantly that 1889 was the centenary of the French Revolution! What would you more?

But, alas! for the Young Bloods and enthusiastic admirers of force, nothing happened at all, except what to them was a most shameful desertion of the Cause. As Mr. and Mrs. Webb aptly describe it:

"The year 1889, instead of ushering in a 'Complete International Social Revolution' by a universal compact of the workers, turned the current of Socialistic propaganda from revolutionary to constitutional channels."

And it was John Burns, the chosen leader of the "Reds" of that day, becoming a member of the London County Council, who led the "Constitutional" party. What abuse the fiery orators and believers in the Commune poured upon his head! But they might have spared their breath. Not a hair did "old John" turn. He did not even get angry. Some one at a big meeting

where the hall rang with execrations of his contumacy proposed that he should be thrown into the Thames. Burns stepped to the front of the platform. "Do it," he said encouragingly, and put his hands in his pockets, and smiled.

The fact was, a fact to be borne in mind at this day when printing-presses are so busy with hysterical outcry at the dangers of "Communism," that the bulk of the Workers themselves, who had won substantial gains by the Dock Strike and the concessions of the Gas Companies, had no illusions as to the cause thereof, and no desire whatever, or intention to make "a combined assault . . . against the murderous monopoly of the minority."

Had that "minority" really proved itself to be murderous, or blind to the signs of the times, something really nasty might have happened. But the friendly response of the Gas Corporations and the readiness of the Dock Authorities to accept mediation, and the general sympathy of the Public to the cry for a better life and opportunities for the poor, drew all the poison out of the real workers' agitation. Revolution, in the Continental sense, was as dead as Queen Anne.

So, steadied by success, and not the least excited by the florid language of their Socialistic friends, Labour of the 'eighties pulled itself solidly together; took stock of the situation and settled down to see what more might be done by strictly peaceful, progressive and constitutional means.

Chapter XXI — *At Grips*

THE boast of the Socialists that they materially affected, by their agitation and promulgation of their economic theories, the course of Industrial legislation during the twenty-five years preceding 1914 is justified, on the whole.

It is too much the fashion among those who detest Socialism politically, whether they be working men—among whom there are an infinitely greater number of anti-socialists than is believed—or Employers, Deans or Dukes, to assume that Socialism denotes an upheaval of present society, and cherishes a beatific vision of men in fustian or corduroy ruling at Westminster and Whitehall.

Socialism wants nothing of the kind. Its vision is rather that fustian and corduroy should pass out of existence, together with fur coats and gold-laced uniforms, and that it only requires sufficient exertion of will and voting power and education in government on the part of working men to raise them not only to the mental level of their social "betters," but considerably beyond it, at any rate as those "betters" disport themselves to-day, whether in their control and manipulation of Industry, or in National government, or relations with other countries.

At bottom, however, Socialism has from the beginning made its chief "plank" Community responsibility for the care, the comfort and the uplift of the under-dog.

It is this principle, and, we venture to assert, this principle alone, which made Socialism a power in the land in the 'eighties, and which has given it a definite amount of public support ever since. Furthermore, despite the tremendous reaction against Bureaucratic control, whether of Industry or the private affairs of citizens of a free country caused by the experiences of the War, this principle makes Socialism, in certain respects, an even greater living force to-day than it has ever been.

We may perhaps say, at this point, that we ourselves do not believe in Socialism, political or industrial. We cannot find justification for its doctrines either historically or from any other point of view. We consider it fundamentally undemocratic, and the administrative system it would set up to be totally unfitted for human beings as they are, and are likely to continue to be.

Therefore, in our estimation, no Socialistic state or Industrial system on a Collective basis will ever be established in this or any other country.

Nevertheless, just as it is axiomatic that no religion which has commanded the earnest faith of great numbers of people is without truth or spiritual power, so with Socialism, as with other political and social creeds.

Socialism, we believe, is responsible for much evil in Industrial affairs. It has taught, in season and out of season, that Employers as a class are beyond redemption. The leading exponents of Socialism have brought themselves to believe, and have scoured History to prove, that to private ownership of property, and the industrial direction by a "class," industrial workers owe all the ills from which they have suffered since they were serfs to the Lords of the Manors. These writers and speakers have consistently ignored every historical incident which proves that some of the greatest advances

in democratic government, and the giving of opportunities to manual workers of all grades to take an honourable place among the citizens of the Empire, have been made, often at great sacrifice, by men belonging to the "propertied" classes, and even by Employers themselves.

Where Socialist teachings have been most to blame has been in their advice to industrial workers and organizations to concentrate their minds on how to get as much as possible out of Industry for themselves, whether in wages or by shorter hours of work; and to take no thought of the risks, losses, difficulties and burdens borne by the Employers. Such teaching is as frankly immoral as the grinding policy of a bad employer. If an Employer does well, they say in effect, his workers must take his profits. If he does badly that is no concern of theirs. It means that an "enemy" is having a bad time, and therefore that perhaps "Nationalization of the means of Production" is so much the nearer realization.

In so far as the Workers, either individually or by combination in Trade Unions, have acted on this advice, they have prejudiced public opinion against themselves, strengthened the hands of grasping Employers, and at the best only proved that their creed is "an eye for an eye."

Nevertheless, Socialism has to be seriously reckoned with.

The rebellion by Strike and otherwise of the Labourers from 1885 to 1889 and its results, while it undoubtedly created trouble all round, and may, as some statisticians prove to their satisfaction, have resulted in far greater material loss than gain to workers, also created a manly spirit of self-determination to stand up for justice and the rights of low-paid, oppressed people, which aroused the public, including Employers themselves, to the need of humanity as well as "business," in Industry.

This rebellion was due, in the first instance, to Socialistic teaching.

The organization of the Labourers into Unions proved to be no flash in the pan. It has developed into a great force in the Industrial world. Moreover these men, by their organization, began to learn the greatest lesson Trade Unionism has ever taught, and the most beneficent for the country, not excluding the interest of Employers —the lesson of responsibility, aforethought, and consideration for their fellows.

Then—the Public. When John Burns and many Socialists joined the London County Council, and their example was followed by others in many great Industrial centres, they did so because they saw that the time had come when by constitutional means and not by agitation, the community as a whole, again including Employers and all holders of property, could be trusted to see that no great country or great empire could flourish or even continue to exist unless it made laws to protect "fair wages", decent conditions of housing and health and recreation for the labouring section of the nation —with its strictly limited power of making a livelihood —and gave it just opportunities in life.

Socialism by initiating this movement, in spite of all its narrowness, doctrinaire shibboleths and fanatical hatred of individual enterprise, has performed a vast service to humanity.

Now we turn to the other side, and to those to whom the mere mention of Socialism is anathema beyond words.

The years which passed between 1889 and the outbreak of the Great War were very critical and hard years for "Capitalists." The whole system of trading, commerce and of manufacture itself was undergoing swift and very baffling changes. The developments in Banking and international system of credits; the drawing

together of foreign countries by the improvement in telegraphic communication; the increasing pressure of competition in manufacture, in which Great Britain had once been supreme; the development of the Colonies, with their own system of tariffs and the increasing of their own home markets, made during these years industrial organization and direction in this country an infinitely more complicated and more difficult business than it had been in former times. The old days, when a man with small capital could conduct profitably and safely a moderate business by industrious and regular routine with a few hundred workers personally known to him, were rapidly passing away. The race was only for the swift and the strong. Large capital and a quick turn-over; prices cut down to the minimum, and a larger and larger output were becoming the only means by which money could be made in manufacture and merchanting. This meant, of course, the turning of the family business into a limited company, and the employment of thousands instead of hundreds of men.

It is not to be wondered at that the business community —harassed and pressed for efficiency and speed and constantly changing fashions and demand for cheaper and cheaper goods; and, in addition, the growing practice of certain foreign governments to subsidize "key" industries, and "dump" manufactured goods on our shores below production-costs in this country—should view with great disfavour and anxiety the growing disposition of Trade Unions to demand higher remuneration irrespective of contracted markets and the lower prices obtainable for goods. Nor is it surprising that, where possible, manufacturers in such circumstances should raise the prices to the consumer, and Labour as consumer find that the real value of such advances in wages it obtained were discounted by the increased cost of living.

The result, for twenty years before the War, was a steadily increasing antagonism between Industrial forces. Industrial workers felt that they were losing rather than gaining ground, in spite of many improvements at public expense, of the conditions under which they lived. Employers and others considered this view unfair. They pointed out that there was now free education for all and secondary schools for the bright pupils, Sanitary laws and Public Health regulations which, when strictly administered, compelled all owners and leaseholders of dwelling-houses to provide sufficient accommodation for families of the poorest, and comparatively decent health conditions even in the worst neighbourhoods. Provision was increasing by crèche and clinic for Infant-Welfare and the education of expectant mothers of the very poor. An Insurance Act was passed which compelled some provision against sickness or accident at the joint expense of worker and employer. Compensation Acts and Factory Legislation had been conceded which, under penalties, compelled Employers to provide safely for their workers' health in factory and workshop, on a scale hitherto unknown.

The Trade Unions, on the contrary—all this time steadily increasing their power, and learning, after many bitter lessons, to make their internal organization more and more efficient—voiced the rising discontent caused by higher prices and the growing ambitions of industrial workers by demanding a still higher standard of living and comfort for their members, and making it clear that whether they obtained it by increasing the burdens of rates and taxes, or by a direct charge upon Industry itself, they were going to have it at the expense of other classes.

Employers, for their part, recognized the futility of attempting to break-up Trade Unionism, and were now even feeling that it had a definite value for them in

Industry, since by negotiation and agreement with a strong Trade Union Executive holding control of a hundred thousand workers in one industry, they had security for the performance of contracts and the behaviour of their own whose numbers made personal supervision impossible. But they viewed with increasing anxiety the constant growth of fresh claims by Labour, and as a prevention against the forcing of such claims, strong Employers' Federations were becoming established in each industry, very much on the lines of Trade Unions, only of course, with much larger financial resources, and manned by officials of long business and legal experience.

Whenever it was possible, the growing tendency of Labour to aim at control in Industrial affairs, and especially by the use of Trade Union organization for gaining political power, was undermined or checked by Employers and owners of property. The Taff Vale Strike decision of 1901 and the Osborne case in 1909 were welcomed by Employers as deliverances, by the law of the land, from a great social danger. The men who directed Industry felt that Labour was becoming a powerful class-conscious force, determined to use political and every other means to gain power in government, not only of Industrial affairs, but of the country and the nation, and they set themselves to prevent it by every means in their power.

It is not our intention to enter into the bitter controversies occasioned by the decisions on these famous cases arrived at by the highest authorities in Law, afterwards nullified by legislation. It is enough to record the fact that, as regards the Taff Vale Strike, in spite of the undoubted danger to which all kinds of property, whether owned by Employers or members of the public, was left open by absolving Trade Unions from all financial responsibility for damage and loss

caused by a Strike of their members, Parliament took the risk by passing the Trade Disputes Act in 1906. Never again while that Act remains unrepealed can a Trade Union be held responsible for damage through a Strike. While in 1913 (though Osborne had won his case four years previously) legal power was given to include in Trade Union constitution "any lawful purpose whatever," and, subject to a majority vote of its members, to a Trade Union Executive to spend money upon any such purpose. This was known as the Trade Union Act of 1913.

But while we see no useful purpose in questioning the decisions of the judges upon Trade Union responsibility for damage by Strikes; or the transfer of money subscribed for industrial purposes by Trade Union members to political uses which they might not, and often did not, approve, it is necessary for our purposes to draw attention to the results of those judgments.

They aroused Labour to a class-consciousness never before felt by the rank-and-file Trade Union man. No arguments, be they ever so logical, convinced a single industrial worker that he was receiving fair play over the Taff Vale decision. All internal disputes and bickerings among Craft Unions and Unions of General Workers were stilled or forgotten, and while the number of Strikes, after it was known that Unions would be responsible for financial loss to Employers, lessened considerably for the time, the actual strength of Trade Union organization as against the forces of Employers, grew enormously. In the same way, denial by the law of Trade Unions, through their Executives, to govern their own funds in their own way for political or other purposes, aroused a sudden and sustained interest in Trade Unionists in the political side of their movement. Sympathy was felt for it by thousands of men who had cared little before, and had rather disapproved of it

than otherwise. It was human nature that this should happen. Members of a family may consider it proper, and even enjoy, to abuse one another, but if outsiders do so, the family closes its ranks; and Labour, after all, is a family—though of very unruly members!

More far-reaching still, and of the most serious importance to the nation as a whole, was the return to Trade Unions of the powers which had been taken from them—the passing of the Trades Disputes Act, 1906 and the Trade Union Act, 1913. It is, of course, easy to say, as many Employers honestly believe, and lawyers declare to-day, that these Acts were simply the result of scandalous political favouritism; mere vote-catching fly-papers, and that justice will not reign in the Industrial world until at least Trade Unions are brought much more strictly within the law. But if this be true—what then? It would seem to prove conclusively that through one cause or another Labour as a separate and, if you will, predatory force, possessed the power in its hands to hold the rest of the Nation to ransom when it was sufficiently determined and united over any object to be attained by constitutional political means.

And if Labour did possess such a power it would have been advisable to investigate the reason why it was so powerful, even if it were only by seeing at close quarters just what the leaders of this monster were really like and had to say for themselves.

But this was not the point of view of Employers of those days. Instead, they fortified themselves more sternly still against an enemy, just as Labour was doing against them. Where there were Strikes in those times, they were very bitter battles indeed. It is true that the violence and sabotage of the rude old days was very, very rarely resorted to in the 'nineties and in the years following the South African War. The Trade Unions had learnt that this did not pay. Sub-consciously

always, and sometimes with full knowledge, they felt the influence of public opinion. The leaders knew, at least, that in any serious and widespread struggle, the final issue would be decided in favour of the side on which that influence was thrown, and that this Public would never brook violence. Employers felt it also, as we have seen in 1889. Year by year, indeed, though imperceptibly, Labour disputes were becoming more and more national affairs. This fact, however, did not lessen the anti-social effect of the war which raged each year more bitterly between sections of the two forces, or give the least indication of how this mutually suicidal antagonism might be avoided or assuaged.

Yet, here and there, individual instances of how hollow and unnecessary it was that men of affairs and intelligence on both sides, who, however keenly alive to their particular interests, were perfectly open to the justice and propriety of the interests of the other side, should hold apart in armed camps, and devote so much energy and time and money to mutual destructiveness.

In the first place there were trades where Strikes never now occurred, but where all matters of difference and dispute were settled by joint boards of representatives on each side, dealing with each other as business men do over a matter which must, in the end, be a bargain and a compromise. Of these trades the largest were the Cotton Trade, the Iron Trade and the Printing Trade.

There were various causes for this, but the main cause was that, long ago, leading men among the Employers, with the loyal support of Trade Union representatives, had laid down the tradition that the main interests of the Industry were a mutual affair, and that if the men would abide by the principle that the interests of the Industry came before the interests of any class, the

Employers would receive them as equals, and would inform them of the facts on every technical and commercial point involved. There was no pretence of altruism in all this, but a seeking of hard-headed business men after fair-play and points of agreement. And those who have personally known the leading men in some of these trades, and their relations with one another, can only desire with all their hearts that such a tradition should exist throughout Industry as a whole.

We cannot help recalling two incidents within our own experience which, in a different way, show that even in those hard driving days of purely commercial outlook on both sides, before the War came and swept us all into the maelstrom of the life-and-death struggle for humanity, there were possibilities of better things.

In 1910–11 we were called in consultation, as having certain social knowledge of the lives and needs of industrial workers, by an Engineering firm. It was a large firm, employing mostly non-Union men, though, as it paid good wages, and did not violate Trade Union principles, many Trade Unionists were working there. The point we had to decide was—what was a fair minimum rate for the lowest unskilled worker. After an inquiry, we suggested a rate, which was immediately agreed to, though it meant a considerable increase in working costs. The next matter was a certain premium-bonus system which the Works-Manager, fresh from experience in America, wished to introduce. His system was modelled upon the "Scientific Management" which was then, and has been since, the *bête noir* of Trade Unions.

After examination of his plan, we suggested that he should call the men together and lecture upon it and invite questions, and base any decision he might make upon the matter on the result of the arguments which might ensue. He followed the advice, with the approval

of the firm, gave information, received a thorough heckling and went into every detail of his plan. He then asked for volunteers to undergo "time-study" on their machines. Ten volunteered. He selected two and began, as an experiment. We saw these men at work. They were intensely interested, earned more money, and worked a maximum of eight hours daily. The experiment was extended gradually until the whole of a department—men, women, girls and boys—was "converted" to this system. It was a peculiar system, quite unlike, in its psychological aspects, its American model. The girls and boys only worked forty-five to fifty minutes out of every hour, and for the odd ten or fifteen minutes were allowed to talk or rest. Each received a bonus upon extra quickness and deftness of working. None were allowed to work for more than eight hours a day, yet their output more than doubled. This scheme, of course, was noised abroad, and much fluttering took place in the Trade Union dovecotes. The Works-Manager then did a daring thing. He invited the local leaders of the Trade Unions to which any of his men belonged to inspect the factory and to examine the scheme in detail. They came, and were let loose in the Works for two hours. Afterwards they assembled in the Board Room, and the leading official then delivered himself of their united judgment. "Mr. ——," he said, "we think that in theory your system is damnable, but we are bound to say that in practice, as you handle it, it works out all right, and we have nothing to say against it at all."

The second incident was in connection with an Official Committee of a certain Government Department. We had been asked to form this Committee, and as it was to report to the Government on certain matters of Industrial training, we suggested that a well-known Employer and an equally well-known Trade Union

leader should be asked to serve. There was consternation over this, because these men were known to be very stiffly inclined against each other's point of view. But the point was carried, and the Committee set to work. In the end, after many plans had been suggested by official people, the Employer put forward one of his own. When the Trade Unionist gave evidence, this scheme and this alone, received his unqualified approval. And it ended by these men fighting for the scheme and carrying it against all opposition—together. This was in 1913.

Chapter XXII *The Great Peace*

THE declaration of war against Germany in 1914 was a signal for the cessation of Industrial conflict throughout the United Kingdom. We need not describe what happened, since no one, of any class, will ever forget, while he lives, the closing of all ranks; the rush to the Colours; the personal sacrifice, equal everywhere, joyously or grimly made according to individual temperament, of the millions who joined Kitchener's Army. And last, but not least, the cheerful uprising of men, whose age and infirmity precluded "active" service, to undertake the not less laborious tasks left behind. Much contumely has been thrown upon the first motto placarded everywhere of "Business as usual." But though it became obviously inappropriate when we had to tighten our belts, and do without, so that we might win through on what there was, yet it has always seemed to us, personally, a peculiarly characteristic note for such a nation as ours to strike in the beginning; and, as it turned out, an invaluable one. It meant, surely, that come what might—and who knew what might happen?—the daily round of tasks necessary to keep the nation cool, and provide for all its members, irrespective of class or fortune—or even character—must and should be done. They were done, and by all sorts and conditions of people, who took up work, mostly created by themselves, which had never been so much as thought about before, and which

they never, at any period of their lives, had previously tried to do.

Old ladies drove motors and drove them courageously and well Old gentlemen, in addition to Special Constable duty, enrolled themselves as Volunteers, and spent most laborious Saturday and Sunday afternoons in digging fearful and wonderful trenches, and in military evolutions on Heaths and Commons, which, whatever may have been their professional value, tired them out, and in some cases caused death.

And in weekdays, how men toiled. The business man in *Punch*, who was found sweeping out his own office, was typical, in the most serious and widest sense, of thousands of his class. Every man, no matter how much, in actual practice, he had been one of the "unproductive classes," turned to and took his share of labour—and secretly, for he rarely confessed to the weakness, enjoyed life as he had never done before. The women, meanwhile, devoted themselves to the "boys." Girls of Society and factory lasses, genteel young ladies from the shops and domestic workers of every degree, came together into the Great Peace, too, and did things, and inspired their men to do things, in a way no records, though they were to form a complete *Encyclopædia Britannica* of barest facts, could ever possibly do justice.

The Trade Unions were in the forefront of all the patriotism of the time, and employers, merchants and shopkeepers lagged not an inch behind. Of course there were exceptions. The shirkers in fustian, sometimes with a Trade Union badge, skulked and stayed at home. The profiteer—who is to be found in every class—raised his ugly head, and, albeit very gingerly at first, stretched out his dirty hands to seize upon the advantages offered to him by the Nation's need. But even he, though he took illicit "pickings," behaved, generally speaking,

with more decency than in former times. He at least worked hard, and spent freely for war purposes, as well as upon himself.

All this was at the beginning. Later, when excitement ceased, and the war which was to take us to Berlin by Christmas, 1914, was found, some two years further on, only to have been begun as far as those at home were concerned, the stress and strain began to tell. People said that out of the welter of the strife of Nations there would presently be born, before the struggle ended, the ugliest and worst form of Industrial warfare that could be conceived; and that when the war was over, and the terrible aftermath of commercial chaos ensued, which had always come after every war, and which would be as much greater than previous crises of the kind as this was greater than all other wars—there would follow Industrial and Social Revolution by the Masses compared to which the French "Terror" of 1789 would be as a storm in a teacup.

These were no idle fears in 1917 and in the early months of 1918. Practically all the vigorous young manhood of the nation was then in training for the trenches or was at work in Munition factories under Government control, or—had returned, those who did return, maimed for life. The heavy, deadening hand of Bureaucracy, now grown to unprecedented proportions, was holding the throat of Industry in a grip which was closing ever tighter and becoming more relentlessly insistent, until it seemed as if Trade could never breathe again.

The men directing Industrial concerns felt this grip most keenly, and the anxieties of manufacturers, the risks of every kind of business undertaking, not excepting those concerned with the supply of munitions and other articles required for war purposes, grew to such proportions that middle-aged men who had been strong

and full of life, grew old and broken, and saw nothing but ruin and disaster before them. Money came to many, but was lost by more. And what was money in those days? The submarines were ruining ship-owners or their Insurance Societies. The demand for ordinary goods of peace-time had fallen to zero. Machinery which had cost hundreds of thousands of pounds was lying idle and deteriorating rapidly, or it had to be scrapped and new machinery set up to make shells and fuses, tanks and machine-guns. Meantime, taxes grew and grew, and prices for every article needed for industrial purposes of any kind soared to ridiculous heights, while profits were cut down and "controlled" by a Department. Then—how to get labour even for the work which Government at least would pay for? Here was the *crux* of the whole position. It was believed at one time that no labour was available. Though Trade Unions had scrapped their rules and limitations as to overtime and output; though dilution was allowed —where were the men, now that Conscription had seized upon every able-bodied person even of middle age?

But the resources of the Nation were far greater than anyone knew. Not only were boys and old men now doing work which only the strong had been deemed fit for, but everywhere the women were coming forward to the bench and the machine; to the yard and the shop; the fields and the counting-house; to offices and Banks. Ladies of refinement and working girls showed equal endurance and adaptability, even scientific and mechanical genius and business capability, which astonished all who saw their work, and not least, themselves.

The advent of women into Industry saved the situation at the moment, and the wheels revolved, though slowly, and with many a nasty jar.

Meanwhile Labour itself, including these boys, old men and women, was undergoing as great a strain as their employers.

As we know, all the safeguards and agreements as to overtime, and regarding dilution in skilled trades of unskilled or semi-skilled workers, had been swept out of the hands of the Trade Unions, with their own consent, to win the war. And now they saw boys and women and nondescript people of all kinds thronging into the works everywhere, while their own members by the hundred thousand were losing their hold, and perhaps their mechanical skill, in the trenches and on the high seas. It was true that the Government and the manufacturers of all trades had entered into a solemn agreement to reinstate all the old rules and regulations of the Craft Unions and do justice, in every way, to the members of the Unions who had joined the Colours. It was equally true that firms and companies without number, in wishing their men Godspeed at the recruiting station, had promised to reinstate them on their return.

But promises may be made in the best of good faith which are impossible to keep. In the latter days of the War it became obvious to the workers that by the dislocation and almost strangulation of ordinary trade caused by the long years of the struggle, and the insistent need for munitions and special supplies and arms of every kind, neither the employers nor the Government, when the end should come, might be able to provide work for the millions now in khaki, and ensure Trade Unions a return to former conditions, even if they had the will. And now, again, that age-long distrust and suspicion, lulled and even gone altogether in some cases, of one class of the other class, began to rise again in the minds of men on both sides.

Strikes, unknown at the beginning of the war, broke

out when workers found the cost of living going up, and wages not advancing to the same amount; but that on the other hand, the published dividends of certain Companies showed great increases, signifying, they believed, large profits to all manufacturers. And these Strikes, as a rule, were successful. Even the threat of strike often brought reward in kind. The Government, nervously anxious to keep Labour happy, yielded again and again in all industries under its control, and earnings, by increased bonus and other devices, grew and grew.

In vain economists on every hand pointed out that these high prices to make profits and pay high wages, were only to be compared to a man taking from Capital to supply his household with luxuries, and that presently Taxes to pay war debts would ruin the manufacturer who lived at high expense, and that wages either would have to undergo drastic deflation when war orders ceased or business could not be carried on or goods manufactured at prices which anyone could pay, and therefore unemployment must set in.

It became plain to all cool heads that the rate of payment for services of all kinds of Industry, whether to capital supplied to it, the direction of managers, or the actual labour of mechanics and workers in shop and factory, was artificially high, and that when the war ended a disastrous break must come in all directions.

The war ended, and before six months had passed this slump began.

Now was to come the test, the crucial test, of hard and painful disillusionment of every grade of Industrial worker, and of investor also, who had hoped against hope that at least some years would pass before Industry as a whole would feel the pinch of bitter times. Every one knew that with the cessation of hostilities there must arrive every kind of complication and difficulty

in re-launching trade upon anything like a normal course, but it was hoped, at least, that with the need of foreign countries for goods and the reduced stocks at home, matters would shake down after an interval, and that as far as Labour conditions were concerned, never again would the pre-war rates return.

The months passed, and the men came back from the Front to find a state of affairs which appalled them. No houses to live in and little or no work to do at the wages they had heard about, from accounts which did not want colour or pungency. Then they found that the Government had made no provision, commensurate with the need, for their reinstatement in civil employment of any kind. Their old employers received them cordially and were obviously anxious to do all that was possible, but they were in great anxiety and uncertainty as to the future. Worst of all, the prices of food and clothing, and all other ordinary items of expenditure, was going up and up, and, as matters stood, appeared likely to continue to do so.

There was, of course, the Unemployment allowance; and every hand was held out to help the "demobbed." But the difficulties of how to do it adequately were beyond the wit of men in authority.

Then there were the discharged munition-workers, male and female, and the Government staffs, and infinite varieties of temporary Civil Servants not wanted any more.

All these were causes for that kind of unrest and bitterness of disappointment and sense of injury among workers of all classes which inevitably follows upon war, and which has marked industrial history, epoch after epoch, with a splash of red.

The results in 1919, however, as far as the working people of this country are concerned, partly from previous events in Industry, partly—perhaps chiefly—from the

peculiar psychology of this particular war, were infinitely more far-reaching and deep-seated, than at any former period.

There was, first of all, their knowledge of the fact that from the beginning to the end of the War, Government and the rest of the Nation itself had depended upon the resources and the intelligent patriotism of Organized Labour to carry the country through the worst crisis in its history. If the Coal Miners had struck, or if the Railwaymen had ceased their work, if the Engineers had downed tools, when the struggle was at its height; or, worst of all, if the Sailors and Firemen of the Merchant Service had refused to man the ships from fear of submarines, what would have become of the Cause of the Allies, and England?

This knowledge did not, as far as the great majority of the workmen were concerned, give cause for empty conceit or shallow boasting. They only felt they had simply done their bit, as every one else—whether shopkeeper's son, lawyer's son, duke's son—had done his, in his degree. Nevertheless, because they had done it, not only individually, as these others, but with the authority of their Unions and Societies behind them, they had a feeling of new dignity and sense of citizenship, and, if you will, of *equality*, with other men, no matter what their rank and station. And they felt this equality should be recognized by all concerned.

It was recognized in 1916–17, in one way, when Mr. George Barnes, Mr. John Hodge, Mr. George H. Roberts, Mr. Arthur Henderson and Mr. Clynes as Trade Union leaders were made Ministers of State. Invitations were extended to other Labour men who might have taken office had they felt they could accept it. Also, in innumerable Committees and Councils of weight and influence, representatives of the workers—and the unskilled workers, too—served side by side and as

honoured colleagues with Employers and other men of every class.

All these events, however, increased the feeling of Labour, which had become acute even before the War, that the time had come when, through its representatives, it should be given some definite and recognized part in the control of working conditions in Industry itself.

It believed that, in spite of war-bonuses and increased wage-rates in every trade, the share it received of the proceeds of production were not nearly equivalent to its share in creating wealth, but what it began to crave most of all in 1919 was status, and a recognition by Employers and the Government of its right to partnership in Industrial affairs.

In the meantime, on the other side, great changes, also, had taken place. War has always been responsible for bringing out much that is bad in human nature, but this war, at least, has done good in our country, of a kind which we believe could not otherwise have been. The conduct of Labour in its sacrifice of agreements won by its Trade Union organizations, and the personal devotion to duty, and sturdy patriotism, of its rank and file, aroused among Employers in all trades acute consciousness of the need and the justice of a greater recognition of Labour's part in Industry than heretofore, and even a desire to find a way by which representatives of Labour should be brought into sympathy, understanding and responsibility over the wider issues of trade and commerce, which hitherto the Employing class had felt to be solely its own business and concern.

This change of view did not begin with the War. In spite of the hard-fought struggle and conflict of interests with Trade Unions which marked the two decades preceding 1914, Employers had seen much

further, and with far broader minds, than Labour knew, into the possibilities of better relations being secured, and the strife and antagonism diminished between Industrial forces.

But what held back Employers in pre-war days was the belief that Labour as a whole was really bent upon a policy of driving up wages, shortening hours, and pushing other material advantages for itself, quite regardless of the economic basis of supply and demand, upon which Industry and commerce must rest if it is to exist at all; and oblivious in every way to the share in actual production, and its results, which, apart altogether from the Capital supplied, the managers and directors of Industrial concerns must justly claim, whether in profit or authority.

The suspicion, in fact, on the part of Labour, that Employers in the mass were merely profiteers and drivers-of-hard-bargains with their men in office or works, was more than equalled by the suspicion of Employers that Workmen, through political socialism among the leaders, were led to desire nothing but the entire control of Industry, or such a share in its proceeds that would virtually lead to its ruin.

The early years of the War greatly modified this suspicion and brought, as well, the sincere desire of Employers to do all that was possible for Labour.

But, unfortunately, the continual demands of working men who had not seen fit to serve in the trenches, but had claimed protection because of official connexion with Trade Unions, for higher and higher wages, and an increasing tendency in certain sections to assert that now the time was near for a complete control by Labour of means of production, which must begin by the Nationalization of Coal Mines, Railways and the Land, caused a reaction. The hearts were hardened of Employers who, from the beginning, had declared

that nothing but very bad times indeed—widespread unemployment and one or two large and unsuccessful strikes, would bring Labour to reason. They now said grimly to the rest : " We told you so."

Affairs, therefore, in the early months of 1919 were in a very serious position indeed. Labour felt a new strength and greater powers than ever before to take an honourable place as co-director of affairs in Industry, and a rising anger at the general attitude of Employers towards an advance in this direction. Employers, while ready as they had never been before to treat Labour democratically as a great human force, and never again as " hands " or cogs in the industrial wheel, were highly suspicious that any approach to real co-operation could only result in impossible claims being pressed forward, which would bring down with a crash all hopes of reinstatement of trade, and might be the prelude to industrial revolution.

Meantime the public outside Industry, and suffering more than anyone in it, saw dark clouds gathering everywhere and stood aghast. It felt, with all its soul, that salvation could only be in both sides pulling together and playing the game, as they had done so nobly in the War. And seeing no hope of this, it called upon the Government, at all costs, to intervene.

Chapter XXIII *Dark Hours*

THE Government, to do it justice—a most difficult thing to do in the last days of the War and afterwards—was perfectly ready to intervene to make peace in Industry, and to utter the most beatific blessings on the head of either Capital or Labour, or both, if they would only settle down and get on with their job.

Unfortunately, through Munition Departments and Labour Ministries and Reconstruction Ministries, and, last but not least, the creation of the Ministry of Food, Government had inextricably entangled itself and its officials in Industrial and Commercial matters. The conduct by these departments of business affected important markets ; prices of prime articles of consumption such as corn and coal ; importation of food-stuff and raw material from abroad ; and even export trade. It was itself, therefore, in a sort of left-handed way, a part of the machine which had gone wrong. Moreover, it was responsible for much that was amiss.

The time has gone by now for abuse of these much-vituperated Bureaucratic machines created by the War. All that need be said on that point is that it would be difficult to find any thoughtful working man who had had personal and responsible experience of government control of Industry during and after the War to whom the old arguments of the State Socialist appeal to-day, or ever will appeal again while he keeps his memory. Of course there are champions of Collectivism still living

who argue that what happened was a grotesque and absurd travesty of the system they have commended, continue to commend, and will commend while they can hold a pen. But, speaking from much knowledge of Socialists of the present day in purely Industrial circles, we confidently assert that if the War has done nothing else it has hung, drawn and quartered and cremated the movement for Bureaucratic control of Industry, and scattered its ashes to the winds.

But it is one thing to become tired of your old man-of-the-sea, as Sindbad found, and quite another to get rid of him. In spite of the fact that our Bureaucratic incubus was at heart an honest and patriotic person, who began to do his level best when the occasion for his authority was over to loosen his limbs and ease the aching shoulders of Industry, so strongly did he feel himself to be necessary, and so fearful, from one point of view, were many sections of Labour of the consequences of his departure, and Employers from another point of view, that he hung on, and only to-day is vanishing from the scene.

In the early days of the War, when a new spirit of mutual respect and consideration arose between Employer and Trade Unionists, and opportunities came for joint responsibilities to be undertaken by Employers' Federations and Trade Unions to prepare and provide, as far as Industry could do it, for the reinstatement of the men of the Forces and munition works upon their demobilization, Bureaucracy stepped in and killed it.

A Scheme was outlined in 1917 by the National Alliance of Employers and Employed by which, with Government control over funds, the Employers' Federations and the Trade Unions of the United Kingdom would make themselves jointly responsible to the Nation for the reinstatement in civil employment of the men of

the Forces and from Munition Factories at the end of the War.

There was to be no scrapping of Labour Exchanges —they would have been the centres of organization. But the feature of the Scheme was that the chief burden of preparing and carrying out the national obligation to ex-Service men, when they were free to return to their homes, should, as far as employment went, rest upon the representatives of Industry itself—acting as partners and being responsible to Parliament for the result, through the Cabinet or a Department of State.

This was in 1917. Such a Scheme, however, created wrath and consternation in Bureaucratic Circles. Immediate counter-steps were taken—through the newly-created Labour Ministry—to smother the baby before it could leave its cradle. But the Scheme had got wind, and was receiving unanimous and even enthusiastic approval from men on both sides, therefore another baby as like it as possible—but really entirely different —was substituted, and displayed by the Government with maternal pride for all the world to admire.

This was the arrangement for "Advisory Committees" of Employers and Trade Unionists in various local centres, to give such assistance and counsel as they might be asked to give—by the officials of the Employment Exchanges. There was, later, a Central Advisory Committee of well-known industrialists appointed to take counsel with the Department itself.

The result was what might have been expected. No systematic preparation whatever, in any practical sense, was made before the War ended for the reception, classification, training or employment of the millions of lads who had been torn from their industrial life and forced for years to live an entirely unnatural, and from an industrial point of view, a most demoralizing, existence.

When the boys did return—the unfortunate Advisory Committees were, of course, called in. But what could they do? What, indeed, in most cases, were they allowed to do? Just—"advise"! They—the only men in the country with expert knowledge of Industrial employment and its possibilities for absorption of men; knowledge, too, of the best way of rendering efficient the stiff hands which had handled arms so long that they had half-forgotten machines and the old jobs; they, the men who should have been in command and borne the responsibility, were under the orders, in effect, of officials who knew nothing of the technique of the employment of Labour or its organization under Trade Union safeguards.

We are not of those who believe that the Civil Servants in the Ministry of Labour, or any other of our new Departments, have either failed to do their duty, according to their lights, or have been, on the whole, wanting in intelligence or efficiency. Inside the Department itself, we have personal knowledge, are men who have done, and are doing, invaluable service to the Nation and to Industry, and are individually trusted and respected by both Employers and Employed.

But the principle of relieving Industrial forces of the responsibility they were ready to undertake of directly seeking out, deciding upon, and carrying into effect (under Government authority) the reconstruction of the human element of Industry, which had been taken away to the trenches and the high seas; and making it fit and efficient to bear its share in the new hard world that war has made for us all, was a disaster—we had almost said a crime—of first magnitude. It is, of all factors in the present internal industrial situation, one which has had most evil consequences.

This policy of the Government in preparing for, and carrying out, Bureaucratically, the huge task of

Demobilization and reinstatement of ex-Service men, together with some of its unfortunate adventures in buying and selling in the world's markets, and the vagaries of the Munitions Department, hopelessly unfitted it to be what the Nation looked for in 1919, namely, the impartial and stimulating influence for the radical improvement in the relations of Employers and the Trade Unions of the country.

Again, let us acknowledge that it tried its best most industriously according to its understanding.

In 1917 it had appointed the Whitley Committee, and so brought into counsel leading Employers and, on the other side, even Mr. Robert Smillie, under the chairmanship of the most sincere and well-trusted friend of Industry, the present Speaker of the House of Commons. The recommendations of that Committee were blessed by the Cabinet, and therefrom have been created over seventy Councils and Committees of Employers and representatives of Labour in separate "organized trades." These Committees, in many cases, have done excellent work. But bodies of men who meet to discuss business problems for a single trade only, however admirable they may act, in some cases as Conciliation Boards, cannot exert—and as a matter of fact Whitley Councils have never exerted—any appreciable influence at all upon the relations of Industrial forces as a whole. What influence, for example, could Whitley Councils, say in the Pottery, Hosiery or Silk industries, exert over a Moulders' Strike, a Railway Stoppage or a Coal Dispute?

The Government, however, through the Labour Ministry and, when necessary, by the intervention of the Prime Minister himself, had up to 1917 taken action in scores of disputes, and made itself the guardian of National interests, and, at the same time, endeavoured to be fair to the Industrialists on each side.

In 1919, under pressure of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress on the one side, and the Federation of British Industries on the other, and the National Alliance of Employers and Employed —supported strongly by the Press—the Prime Minister called, in February of that year, a Conference at the Central Hall, Westminster, of representatives of all Employers' Federations and Trade Unions in the Kingdom, to consider the situation, and not only advise the Government, but jointly to devise remedies in the national interest for industrial unrest.

The situation was grave, even menacing. Dark clouds had already begun to gather over the Coal-fields and a Strike was possible there at any moment. The Triple Alliance of Miners, Railwaymen and Transport Workers was fully established, and no one knew what might happen if trouble were begun in any of those industries.

The Conference was held; Sir Robert Horne, then the new Minister of Labour, was an impressive and impartial Chairman. The Prime Minister was not only present, but at a critical moment intervened in his inimitable way, and smoothed out creases which might have led to trouble.

The Coal-Miners were not represented there at all, and Mr. J. H. Thomas, from the National Union of Railwaymen, and Mr. J. T. Brownlie, from the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, though they spoke favourably of the intentions of the Government in the matter, gave little hope that their Unions would join in the movement.

Nevertheless, the Conference was successful. Six hundred representatives of Employers and Labour organizations approved a resolution moved by the Right Hon. Arthur Henderson, P.C., M.P., supported by the Prime Minister and afterwards seconded by Sir Alan Smith, Chairman of the National Employers' Federa-

tion, which provided for the appointment of a Joint Committee of representatives of the Trade Unions on the one hand, and Employers' Federations on the other, in equal numbers. This Committee was to inquire into and consider vital and outstanding questions generally affecting Industry on which legislation might be required, and report officially to the Government. The Committee was elected then and there and went to work with the best of goodwill. In a very short time it had prepared measures for the consideration of Parliament which embodied a Legal Maximum Eight-hour Day for Workers, and the appointment of a Statutory Wage Commission.

The Ministry of Labour undertook to present these Recommendations, agreed to, of course, by the Employers, to Parliament.

Difficulties arose over the inclusion of Agricultural and other industries in which the hours of labour differ entirely from those of the factory and workshop. But it was felt by the leading men on both sides that, with the spirit of goodwill manifest among the members of the Committee, patience and energetic negotiation would remove all obstacles in due course. What was needed, however, was equal goodwill from the Government and its Departments, and the desire on their part to get something done.

This was not forthcoming, and, in the end, the labour of the Joint Committee came to nothing, and in 1921 it was finally dissolved—its endeavours barren of all direct practical result.

The real causes of this very serious disaster—for it so proved—are obscure. It is ominous, however, that men on both sides attribute the failure of the Conference entirely to Government, or Departmental, supineness and apathy.

It was alleged freely, especially on the Labour side,

that the whole thing was merely a Government put-up job to quieten the disturbance in the public mind, and in Industry, over the danger which was extremely imminent, of a widespread and bitter dispute in the Coal-fields and among the Railwaymen. By the appointment of the Joint Committee and the successful endeavour made by the leaders of Labour, and among the Employers, to arrive at agreement over very important fundamental principles regarding maximum hours of labour and minimum remuneration, the Industrial sky cleared. Owners and Unions agreed to the appointment of a Coal Industry Commission to inquire into all matters pertaining to the Industry previous to de-control and a return to normal trade. Upon which the Government dropped the Industrial Council.

We hesitate to express any opinion on so serious a charge. It has not been disproved, yet it is hardly conceivable that a Government so well-informed on Industrial affairs could have allowed so vital an opportunity of establishing better relations in Industry, by respectful attention to the united recommendation of so representative a body of the National Industrial Conference, to be lost by mere neglect. We fear not. There is too much evidence to the contrary in the conduct, later on, of the Coal Commission itself, and in regard to the controversy which resulted in the Railway strike six months later, and the Coal Dispute of 1921.

Be this as it may, the failure of the National Industrial Conference, while it did not embitter relations between Employers and Trade Unions, thanks to the public spirit of leading men on both sides, proved conclusively that it was quite useless to expect the Government to initiate effectively any real change in the relationship of the two forces in Industry.

In the years which followed, the Public saw, with

increasing anxiety and disquiet, that apparently all the old elements of acute difference between "Capital and Labour" were re-establishing themselves, and that the "War-spirit" which had brought organized Labour into National life, in the country's need, as a great patriotic, auxiliary force making for stability and a growth of united strength to secure the fruits of the "Victory to Democracy" symbolized by the crushing of German militarism, was dying, if not dead. In its place there was a grim and very awkward determination in certain powerful sections of Labour to use the power and weapon of the Strike to force the rest of the Nation to adopt extreme Labour views on national and international political Labour issues.

"Direct Action" became a war-cry among popular and influential leaders of the Coal-Miners, whose Trade Union strength and solidarity outstripped that of any other combination of Labour throughout the country. In addition, the Revolutionists in Russia were acclaimed by Labour up and down the country as saviours and disciples of the Cause for which the Socialist elements among Industrial Workers had fought and striven for two centuries.

It seemed as if, at any moment, the country might be confronted with a huge, well-led and almost universal demand from organized Labour as a whole, that the Nation must yield to political as well as industrial dictation from that section of the community, or face the consequences of civil war. It was true that certain bodies within the ranks of Labour, and these strongly organized —of which the National Seamen and Firemen's Union was the most outspoken—repudiated the whole programme of Direct Action, lock, stock and barrel. More significant still to those who knew something of the inwardness of Trade Union organization was the refusal of the Trade Union Congress to enter into any pledge to support

such action. But the public and the Employers, who were most directly concerned, only knew what they saw and heard. And this was that no repudiation of the creed of Russian Bolshevism was given by the accredited political leaders of Labour in the House of Commons; and that while, personally, they made no pretence of approving "Direct Action" by any Industrial Strike—and even spoke very frankly against the principle—yet it seemed to be an open question how far they would or could hold in their electors and the aggressive members of their Unions.

In this crisis, which was indeed most serious in the public eye by the enormous accumulation of funds the Trade Unions had amassed through the prosperity of their members owing to war-wages and bonuses, a very great and onerous responsibility rested upon Employers, more especially the great Federations which had been formed, or had increased, as the Unions had done, their strength and financial stability during the War. Employers had made money, as a class, during the War. This is not, and never has been denied. But the strain and anxiety upon them, as they looked at the future and faced not only the increasing burden of taxation—which crippled in many vital ways their resources for launching out to capture the trade of foreign markets—but the enormous increase of costs, caused by the larger wages paid to Labour—more than double those of pre-war times—was at its maximum. Any person with historical knowledge of Employers in the past, even up to the outbreak of War, felt greater fear of what their action might be now, than the threats of direct-action extremists in Labour ranks. It would have been perfectly consonant with their former policy and point of view toward Labour in Industry for Employers at any time during the past three years to have combined compactly, and using, without

ruth, their immense financial and business powers, to have presented an Ultimatum to Labour which would have placed it in a most critical position. All that was needed was that spirit, once so prevalent among Captains of Industry, which should let Labour know, once and for all, that while Industry was in the hands of private owners, there was to be complete submission, under penalties, to the will of these owners. Under no pretence were those whose living depended upon the success of Industrial enterprise—the burden of which lay upon the Directors of Companies and the heads of Firms—to be allowed to take powers to themselves and dictate to their masters.

But the Employers' Federations, and the great companies employing individually many thousands of workers, took no such action. The stress and strain under which they suffered neither broke their nerve nor warped their better judgment. They felt the attitude of Labour bitterly, and the sustained indictment of their class that it was composed, chiefly, of soulless profiteers. They severely dissented from the point of view expressed in international affairs by Labour members of Parliament, and they were suffering acutely from the burdens and increased costs caused by the higher standard of life which Workers had obtained under the exigencies of war.

Nevertheless, except on the part of certain individuals, employers kept their heads and only declared in the Press and in Parliament, and to the Unions in their several industries that they were, economically, mistaken in their point of view.

Employers, in short, perhaps for the first time in the history of Industry, did what their great powers and responsibilities made it meet that they should do—took Labour into their confidence and talked business to it, and put before it their practical knowledge of

business finance, and trade, and the incidence of the war, as they would to men of their own class.

This conduct, we are convinced, together with a like spirit of moderation and dignity expressed by the leaders of Labour in return, alone saved this country from a catastrophe little imagined by the man in the street. The dangers were not fully met. They have not been met fully yet. But though crisis followed crisis, after the abortive effort to create a real council of Industry in connexion with the National Industrial Conference, there has never been one which has separated Employers and Employed into the irreconcilable opposing camps, with loins girded for warfare to the death, which marked the industrial crises of former days.

This does not mean, of course, that the leopard has changed his spots, or that over questions such as Nationalization of property and means of production, and what not, there does not exist between Employers of every degree to-day disagreement with measures which have received the formal and official approval of the Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party. But it means that the brotherhood inspired by the united struggle against all that German domination over the Allies, had Germany won the War, would have meant, has sunk deeply into the hearts and minds of the Business Community of this country. That is the basic fact which emerged from the dark days Industry passed through from November, 1918, to the spring of 1921, and has remained solidly intact, even after the agony of the Coal Dispute and the terrible Unemployment misery and approach to bankruptcy in many trades, which are upon us to-day. It remains to be seen—and we shall try to indicate our own point of view upon the matter —whether this union of heart and mind, which won the European War for Democracy, can win the war in Industry for Right and Justice, to the honour of all

concerned; or whether it must be considered lost, and a struggle lie before the Nation now only less terrible in its consequences than that which has robbed it of its bravest sons, and impoverished the world.

Chapter XXIV *The Darkest Hour*

THE obstruction by the Government, whether deliberate, or from mere apathy, which caused the failure of the National Industrial Conference to carry into effect measures that would have deeply impressed Labour with the value of joint action with Employers, gave a great advantage to extremists in the Trade Union movement. They were able to point out that co-operation with "Capitalists" was of no advantage, and that the Government had no intention, unless made to do so by force, of paying the least respect to any representatives from Industry.

Employers also were vituperated by large sections of Labour as holding the Government in the hollow of their hands. The Federation of British Industries, for instance, the least politically-inclined body of Employers to be found—if only because among its leading members are men who are strenuously opposed to each other on most political issues—was said to possess an enormous "pull" in the House of Commons, while the Majority held by the Unionist and Liberal-Unionist groups was considered to be proof-positive that no justice to any claim of Labour could be expected from the Legislature.

The immense gains in wages and in the general status of Trade Unionists brought about by the War were incentives to Extremists to take more drastic measures still. "Direct Action," though cold-shouldered by the Trade Union Congress, and openly opposed by the

Labour Party in the House of Commons, was more beloved than ever by certain men, whom we know, now, looked to the ferment which would inevitably be created by the de-control of the Coal industry, to give them the opportunity to bring the Government to its knees, and compel, if necessary by force, the Nationalization of the Mines.

These ideas did not permeate the sober rank and file of Labour. The Labour Press made the most of them, and the younger members of many Unions used much intemperate language. They urged Labour to take violent measures and pursue a policy of aggressive antagonism to the rest of the community. The majority of Trade Unionists, however, were definitely adverse to such a policy and condemned direct action in all its forms.

Unfortunately, no association existed between this majority and the Employers which was of sufficient authority and strength to hold in check those men who possessed the power to set fire to the combustible elements among discontented Industrial workers—Coal Miners in particular.

It is a thankless, and indeed an impossible task to attempt, as matters have turned out, to determine whose shoulders should have the blame of the Strikes and disputes which occurred all through 1920, and which finally culminated in the Coal Dispute of 1921. Indeed it is recognized that all, Government and Employers included, must bear a share of responsibility. Nevertheless, as we have not hesitated to frankly criticize the Employers of past generations for their treatment of Labour, it would not be right to fail to record our opinion of the very serious responsibility which rests upon Labour since the incidence of the War placed it in a commanding position.

No one could expect that when Labour found itself at

a premium it would not make the most of it to exact terms for its services, whether from Employers or the Government, which would raise its standard of life above that of the low level of pre-war days. It has further to be acknowledged, and has been so acknowledged by Employers, that, with the exception of certain sections, Labour played the game when the War was at its height. Under great temptation, and even provocation, it refused to listen to its extremist counsellors, and lined up to defend the country and to carry on.

But since the War was over there has been a serious lack of economic vision, and even sanity, among certain powerful Unions.

Few people, in these days, consider that the share of Labour in the proceeds of Industry is adequate; and among modern Employers there has been expressed a universal desire to devise means by which that share may be increased. But the first and obvious question for two years past has been—how shall Industry continue to provide any profits for anyone? That certain companies until lately have paid large dividends is no argument that Labour should not consider, as deeply as Employers, how the revival of the Nation's export trade is to be accomplished, and decide, and state to the Public, what the responsibility of Labour in this vital matter was going to be.

We do not forget that such leaders in Labour as Mr. J. R. Clynes, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. J. H. Thomas, Mr. Frank Hodges and others have consistently preached the need for maximum production by Labour, and the duty of all workmen to give of their best; but, on the other hand, it has been widely whispered and sometimes boldly declared that men will not and should not work hard under a system of private ownership, and that until Industry is Nationalized it is not fair to ask them to do it.

These counsels, and others even more grotesque and calculated to weaken all efforts on the part of workmen to do their share to pull the country through the morass of the industrial aftermath of the War, are not only unpatriotic in the worst sense, but are suicidal from the narrowest, most class-conscious, Labourite point of view. They have awakened in the Public a very widespread distrust for Labour's claim to govern the country and have enormously strengthened the argument of the old-fashioned Employer that the manual worker, while at bottom a good chap, is not a person who reasons very deeply, or will ever be fit to be trusted with any real share of responsibility or authority in Industry.

Now, those who have lived among workmen and have shared responsibility with them, know that this is not true. The average workman has as much power of concentrated thought and certainty of taking responsibility as the members of any other class. He has one weakness, perhaps. He is too trustful of men who have gained his confidence, and too loyal to those of his own class whom he has placed in positions of authority—until he finds his confidence has been betrayed.

The tragedy of the Coal dispute is direct evidence of this over-confidence. There were leaders on the Executive of the Miners' Federation who, whatever their political views might be, honestly worked for peace, but there were others who hoped for, and intended to force at all costs, Nationalization of the Mines, and who used every slip made by the Government and every untoward act of the Coal Owner to drive the men in the Coal-fields to come out *en masse*, paralyse Industry and hold the Nation at their mercy.

We shall not easily forget the end of a speech of a Miners' leader to young miners which we heard in the summer of 1920. He had made out a case for Nationalization from the point of view of the Public. He had

most eloquently repudiated the idea that Miners wished for this change from any selfish or mercenary motive. Then, of a sudden, his tone changed. His jaw was thrust out grimly and his eye gleamed. "But why argue?" he said. "Nationalization is going to come. It is going to come very soon. It is going to come because a million Miners have determined that it shall, and no power in this country will prevent them from having their way."

That spirit was among the leaders of the Miners of Wales, Scotland and Lancashire. Not among all, but of sufficient strength to overcome, at each critical juncture, those who counselled compromise and the coming to terms.

The Coal Owners knew it; the Government knew it. They may also have known that it was not the Miners, as a body, who held so anti-social a doctrine. They certainly knew that Labour leaders, as a whole, were totally opposed to anything of the kind, and better than anyone they knew what ghastly misery it would inflict upon millions of working men and their families, who had no more to do with the matter than if they lived in another planet.

But what could they do? What could anyone do except offer fair terms and earnestly counsel prudence and common sense.

Mistakes were made by every one, and the suddenness of the de-control, the abruptness of the announcement of drastic wage-cuts by the Owners, were matters which the Public expressed its views upon with no uncertain voice. But it was not with the Government or the Owners that the ruin wrought by the stoppage chiefly lay. It was the insensate obstinacy of those men who—though fully aware of the consequences—used their immense powers to prevent settlement except upon terms which no self-respecting government could grant.

In a less degree the other leaders who saw the wrong that was being done to their cause, and to the men, women and children who trusted them, were also responsible by their "loyalty" to their colleagues. This has been admitted by Mr. Herbert Smith himself. There is even the support given to the Miners by the Trade Union Congress to consider. But before we judge those who, while dissenting from the extremists, took no active steps against them in public, we have to remember that any action of this kind would have done incalculable harm to Labour solidarity. It would have been construed by the Miners, one and all, in every part of the country, as an act of treason never to be forgiven or forgotten. As well could a British Army Corps, during the War, have declared itself against the cause of the Allies on account of mistakes, or worse, at H.Q. in France.

Even now, when relations of Employers and Employed, as we shall presently attempt to show, are becoming radically different from those of pre-war days, no Trade Unionist, however moderate, will desert his comrades when they are on strike, whatever may be his opinion of those comrades for striking and his own sufferings as a consequence of their folly.

So the struggle went on, and many weary weeks passed even after the Triple Alliance had broken away because neither Railwaymen nor Transport Workers were under the grip of the men on the Miners' Executive who forced the issue of the Pool as their last ditch.

We know how the end came at length, and the terms of the settlement. We know how hard Miners have worked since then, and that if increased labour alone forcing up output would have reinstated the industry, or those trades chiefly dependent upon it, we should have seen an uplift in trade beyond all expectation.

We know, too, what Miners now think of the policy of those of their leaders who made peace impossible

until beaten out of all their defences. And, finally, we know that the spirit of Labour since the end of the struggle came has changed beyond all knowledge.

It is upon this change, coupled with the response which, in spite of notable exceptions, Labour has met with from Employers, that we would concentrate now, and in which, we are wholly convinced, lies the hope of better things for Industry than have ever before been known.

If we look back upon the Industrial history which we have attempted to set forth in its relation to Strikes and Revolts of Labour, we shall see that on every occasion when trade expanded and boomed, Labour, as soon as it acquired freedom to combine, being in demand dominated the situation as far as it was able. In this, it followed the example of Employers, who had as consistently cut combinations of Labour to pieces when times were bad and unemployment knocked at the workman's door.

As years passed, this warfare grew in intensity, though it became more civilized in outward form. Then, just as plans were laid by Labour for Strikes of greater magnitude than ever in the Railway and other Industries, and the Employers, on their side, were gathering together to protect their interests and thinking only how to weaken the power of combined Labour—the War came upon us, and the "Great Peace" in Industry was signed and kept for four years.

What has happened since? Assuredly we cannot pretend that Industrial strife has ceased. But a new atmosphere has been created, and leading men in Labour with hundreds of thousands of Trade Unionists behind them, together with great Federations of Employers, see Industrial development under an aspect altogether different from that of pre-war days.

There are, to begin with, the Whitley Councils. They

have had their ups and downs, and it is the fashion in trades where they are not yet established to emphasize the failures among them and to cultivate blindness to their successes. But those who have studied that movement as a whole, for which the Government must be given credit, since it has introduced the principle even among its own Departments—tell us that the failures grow less and the successes more marked as the machinery of the movement is better understood and more deftly handled.

But besides these joint councils, which only cover certain industries, and those separately, another movement has made itself felt, is rapidly enlarging in scope, and is extending its operations throughout the country.

This movement is known as the National Alliance of Employers and Employed. It would not become us, who have close official connexion with the administration of this association to lay undue stress upon any success the Alliance may have attained, or upon its claim, as an organization, for public support. This, indeed, is beside the mark for our purpose. The point that we would make in regard to the movement is its significance as a feature of modern industrial development.

In 1915 a few men, Employers of high standing and Trade Union officials of large Federations, together with two City Bankers, an ex-Chairman of the London County Council and a high official of a Government Department, conferred together over the best means of preparing, when the time came, for reinstatement of men of the Forces in civil life, at the end of the War. These conferences resulted in the formation of a small Committee which in a quiet way brought into co-operation members of the House of Lords and the leaders of the Labour Party over measures brought before Parliament concerning aid for men disabled in the War. In

the summer of 1916 the Chairman of the Committee, the late Right Hon. Frederick Huth Jackson, P.C., gave evidence on its behalf before a Government Committee which had been appointed by Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister, to consider Demobilization in connexion with the Labour Exchange System. In the autumn of that year private conferences upon this question were held at Mr. Huth Jackson's house, and attended by four eminent Employers and four leaders of Trade Unions. Resolutions on the subject were drawn up and unanimously agreed to, and in December a larger conference was held and the Resolutions submitted to twenty-five Employers, representing the key industries of the country, and fifteen Trade Unionists, who were representative and as influential on their side as the Employers.

This conference, called merely for consideration of the practical and very difficult question of how Employers and Trade Unions might co-operate in preparing for, and dealing with, the problem of demobilization when the War should end, became the spark which fired the magazine, and established an Alliance of Employers and Employed.

The following Resolution was submitted from the Chair and supported on the one hand by Mr. F. Dudley Docker, C.B., the first President of the Federation of British Industries, and Mr. J. T. Brownlie, President of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers :—

> " That the cordial and whole-hearted co-operation of Employers and Employed will be the most important element in the Success of any Scheme for dealing with the reinstatement of the men of the Forces and Munition Workers in civil employment, the general distribution of labour after the War, and for handling any subsequent problem of unemployment or Labour dislocation."

This Resolution, after speeches in favour of the principle involved had been made by the majority of those

present, was carried with acclamation, and then and there, with an enthusiasm which no one who was present will easily forget, it was resolved that all should form themselves into a Committee to carry the resolution into effect. An Executive Committee of the leading Employers and Trade Unionists in equal numbers was then formed, with powers to place the movement upon a properly established basis.

In January, 1917, a public meeting was held at Birmingham—so large that it overflowed and filled two buildings—presided over by Mr. Nevile Chamberlain, the Lord Mayor, at which the Employers' Federations and the Trade Unions of the city were fully and officially represented. The creation of a "National Alliance of Employers and Employed" for the purpose assigned in the Resolution was unanimously resolved upon, and an influential Committee appointed for the Birmingham area. In February a similar meeting was held at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, and addressed by speakers from both sides, including Mr. Tom Mann, who, in an eloquent address which brought the whole of the audience to its feet, strenuously argued that the time had come when Employers and Trade Unions should take hold unitedly of Industrial affairs and rid Industry of a Bureaucratic domination which was crushing out its life. Later, great gatherings were held in Cardiff, Sheffield, and Newcastle, and so unanimous was the support given to the principle of "whole-hearted co-operation" between Employers and Employed in matters generally affecting Industry as a whole, that by 1918 the Alliance had become an established Association. Many of its members now served upon its Executive Committee and Council as delegates from National Unions and Employers' Federations.

It was not, however, upon the early enthusiasm of the war-period that the Alliance was destined to take

root and develop into a working body of practical men. Great and sincere as that enthusiasm proved to be, it did not succeed in awakening response from very many of the National Executives of the large Trade Unions, and principally for this reason several of the Employers' Federations, though sympathetic to the movement, did not see their way to associate themselves with it by official affiliation. But by this time, the autumn of 1918, in several important Industrial centres the leading Employers and representatives of local Labour Organizations had met together and decided to form Alliance Committees representative in equal numbers of Employers and delegates from the Trade Unions of the district ; these Committees to be representative of all trades and occupations in the area, and their purpose to be frank discussion of the problems equally affecting all industries, and by joint action to improve the social and industrial condition of workers on the one hand, and the efficiency of Industry, from the Employers' point of view, on the other. Each Committee is represented on the Central Council of the Alliance, which controls the policy of the movement.

This local organization of voluntary joint-committees in manufacturing centres of men responsible for Industrial affairs on both sides has been the central feature of the organization the Alliance has set up. There are now thirty-six such Committees, and similar bodies are in course of formation in sixty additional districts. Over two thousand Trade Unions in the areas covered by the Alliance are affiliated and officially support the movement. These include thirteen Trades and Labour Councils.

Elsewhere will be found particulars of the various departments of "Alliance" work which have been opened up, as the principle of joint action by representative Employers and delegates from Trade Unions

has taken root and thrown out branches of mutual effort for a common purpose.

The significance of the movement lies in the evidence it gives within Industry to-day that there does exist, in spite of all the obvious difficulties and cross-currents of political and social differences of point of view between Employers and Labour, a genuine, growing and *mutual* desire to break down the evil tradition and barriers of the past. Practical means on an organized and systematized basis are being found for joint consideration of the problems which confront both sides, and a solution which shall ultimately, if it is humanly possible, remove the age-long antagonism and separation which has, so far, made Industry, in very truth, a house divided against itself.

We have still to consider impartially, whether such a spirit, if it were developed and supported by the men holding national responsibility on either side, could remove the sense of injustice on the part of Labour which is at the root of all Industrial strife, and convince Employers that it is possible for their Labour brethren to be received as partners in deciding the main issues of industrial policy and development upon which the prosperity of the whole community depends.

"*THE Round Table*"[1] for September, 1921, contains an article which, with admirable impartiality, deals exhaustively with the strength and weakness, the success and the failure, of "Capitalism" and "Labourism," and ends with a brief essay on "The Way Out" of Industrial antagonism between "Capital" and "Labour." We should like to quote this article verbatim, but this is impossible. There is, however, one paragraph which, in our opinion, epitomizes perfectly the situation and defines the promise which we believe the future of Industry contains, and towards which we know that thousands of Employers and hundreds of thousands of Trade Unionists are striving at this moment.

"The way out of the Capital and Labour impasse"—the writer of the article suggests, after showing in vigorous yet moderate terms what the impasse is, and what it means to the country at the present time—"is the recognition by both sides that they must work together on fair terms. Capital has to make up its mind to take Labour into partnership, treat it as an associate equally concerned with itself in the success and conduct of business, and distribute the proceeds on a basis which is just; and recognize that the well-being and contentment of the employé are as important an end as efficiency and dividends. Labour, on the other hand, has to drop the class-war and the Socialist revolutionary millennium and accept partnership with Capital on terms which secure it a fair share in their joint enterprise, and then do its best to make the partnership a success."

[1] "National Prosperity and Industrial Peace."

Now of course we are well aware that men on both sides, and men of goodwill too, and earnest belief in the principles so clearly outlined here, will shake their heads, and smile sadly and say, "Yes—yes. Excellent sentiments, and sensible, too, as principles, but how on earth, with certain Employers out for money (and some powerful ones, too) and certain Labourites whose livelihood depend upon making trouble and stirring up strife for political and other purposes, are you going to reduce them to practice, and get them adopted by people who matter?"

We accept the challenge. We also admit, as we must after what we have described ourselves in our brief history of the ancestry and upbringing of Industry, and his way of life, even during the last twelve months, that for him to turn over a new leaf at his age is expecting a good deal.

Nevertheless, we believe he is going to do it, and in any event we are certain that he can do it if he tries, and that he must do it.

In the first place, while infinite loss, hardship and bitterness of soul has afflicted Industry of late years, and most of all during 1921, it has, on the whole, drawn masters and men—to use the old phrase—together. In the 'seventies and 'eighties the severe depression of trade which followed a long and exceptionally prosperous cycle of good trade only produced intensely bitter antagonism, and a policy on both sides of sheer naked industrial war.

That is not the case to-day, though in the years which have passed since the war with Germany ended there has very nearly been actual Revolution: Labour men have preached "Social Revolutionary Millennium" in very high places, and Employers have conducted active campaigns against "Communism" and "Bolshevism," and called the very men in Labour ranks who have

striven against Revolution by very bitter and quite undeserved names.

The reason why Employers and Employed are not at war to-day lies in a consciousness, which runs underneath all the platform utterances of men even when speaking to a narrow, class-prejudiced audience on one side or the other, that there is only one way out of the industrial slough of despond all are suffering from—and that is by combination of the "Capitalist" and the "Labourite."

It is said, and with reason, that the order of the day, whether among Capitalists or Labourites, is Amalgamation writ large—amalgamation, that is, of each individual interest or party. The Unions of Craftsmen have amalgamated with non-craftsmen in large industries. Employers of this or that trade have entered into alliances offensive as well as defensive with Employers of other trades. The small trading establishments have been swallowed up in the great amalgamations of "Distributive trade" organizations. The old private Banks are losing their identity in great Banking Corporations, and so on. And this means, the pessimists tell us, conflicts in the future between Capital and Labour infinitely more far reaching and disastrous to mutual co-operation than anything which has been experienced in the past.

We deny this assumption. We have had some experience of these combinations on both sides, and of the men who promote them. In especial, we have personal knowledge of the motives at work in the minds of those chiefly responsible for the new "General Council of Labour," and, on the other side, of the men who are engaged in federating more and more closely the various associations of Employers. We do not find, we confess, that these men, or those whom they influence, are Utopian. On either side these leaders

keep well in mind the particular interests they represent. But, for this very reason—when, as can be proved, these men more than others emphasize their desire to substitute co-operation for strife, and mutual confidence and understanding for antagonism; when we find that the conviction is growing on either hand that the root of the Industrial war in the past was lack of understanding and true appreciation of economic facts, and of a human understanding of the other fellow's point of view among the leaders on both sides—we are encouraged to believe that the problem is soluble and that fusion may be in sight.

There can be no royal road to better things. Human nature being what it is, the path to solidarity of interests which conflict at many points must be difficult to find, and progress along it very slow. But the point is, firstly, that the path is there, and secondly, that the paramount interest of all concerned lies in finding and then pursuing it.

We have, in our previous chapter, indicated the seeking of common agreement upon Industrial policy and joint action by Employers and Employed for the improvement of the lives of Industrial workers and the efficiency of Industrial undertakings in various Industrial centres where the National Alliance of Employers and Employed has established Area Committees. We have noted that this Alliance has become a recognized medium for the creation of a new atmosphere in Industry.

The Alliance and its policy are still on trial. Time alone can show whether it will become a permanent influence for a community of interest between Industrial forces. But the National Alliance of Employers and Employed, though the first, is only one movement building up a new relationship between "Capital and Labour." Another movement on parallel lines and

promoted by the Alliance is at work. At present it is confined to informal conferences of individuals on both sides, and it is not advisable at the present time to say more than that these men are of national reputation and influence, and took an active part in the proceedings of the National Industrial Council of 1919.

Then we find that on November 29, 1921, the Right Hon. Arthur Henderson, M.P., in an address to the Rotary Club at Burnley, Lancashire, outlined a broad constructive scheme for the formation of an Industrial "Parliament of Labour" representative of the organization of Employers and Workers over the whole field of Industry, and capable of expressing, after full and frank consultation and co-operative effort, the whole mind of Industry.

Mr. Henderson suggests in his address that by means of such a Parliament the whole basis of the relationship between Employers and Industrial workers might be changed and result in the establishment of real and permanent co-operation between Employers and Trade Unions.

Mr. Henderson made it clear that such an organization would in no way usurp or overlap with the functions of such bodies as Whitley Councils, or any other joint boards or committees established in individual industries. His Parliament would "devote itself to the problems concerning our whole economic life . . . its main function would be to bring Industrial life and activity into harmony with modern requirements, with human needs, and with the finest spirit of our times."

Mr. Henderson laid emphasis upon organized Capital ceasing to give Labour "a feeling of economic inferiority and subordination." On the other hand he said that "the Employed must remember how vitally the success of Industry affected the whole community." His main contention was that Industry

should be reorganized upon a basis much more human than is the case at the present time, because "Industry exists for man, and not man for Industry." He insisted, as the writer in *The Round Table* has done, upon the basis of relations between Employers and Labour being one of partnership.

Opinions may differ as to when the time will be ripe for the creation of such a Parliament of Labour. We believe, however, that the need for such a step to be seriously taken into consideration by the men who matter in Industry is very urgent.

This time, however, any measure of this kind must be initiated by Employers' Federations and Trade Unions acting together, and should not be set in motion by the Government.

Mr. Henderson's scheme is in embryo, and before pronouncing upon its merits or otherwise as a practicable proposition, the public, and still more the principal men in Industry, will require elucidation of many details of how the machine he proposes to create would work out in practice.

Nevertheless we believe that within the conception of a "Parliament of Industry" or whatever it may be called—we are not sure that "Parliament" is the right word—lies the solution of the problem of effectively attacking at the root the cause of Strikes.

Strikes, as we have endeavoured to show, are the outcome of a sense of injustice on the part of Industrial workers. The Lock-out—the Employers' weapon of Industrial war—is, from their point of view, a resort to force either because negotiation has failed, or because, in their opinion, the circumstances of the dispute in question preclude negotiation.

It is only by a radical and fundamental reconstruction of the normal relationship of Employers and Employers' Federations on the one hand, and Workmen

and their Trade Union organizations on the other hand, that any security worthy of the name against the use of Strikes or Lock-outs can be established.

If this is impossible, and, as we have admitted, there are many who will say it is, we see nothing to look forward to in the future, but the same bitter suicidal, and, we venture to say, fratricidal antagonism and strife which has divided the nation into warring classes, and has debilitated Industry for 200 years.

The Industrial situation at the present time is very serious indeed. Manufacturers have lost their markets; unemployment among workmen is at its height. The alternative to the mutual confidence and spirit of comradeship and good-will which is to be found in some of the Whitley Councils, among the Committees of the National Alliance of Employers and Employed, and which we believe Mr. Henderson hopes his "Industrial Parliament" will evoke between the leaders of Industry, is a policy of drift. And when a ship, to which we may liken Industry—changing our former metaphor—is in shallow water surrounded by reefs, a policy of drift may lead to disaster.

There is no precedent for the present condition of Industrial affairs, or for the remedy we advocate. We have sought in vain in the working of the Compulsory Arbitration Acts in Australia and New Zealand; and in the Conciliation Boards of our own and other countries, for a remedy that is in any sense adequate to meet the needs of this supreme crisis.

The history of Industrial organizations everywhere has proved that all Strikes and dislocations have been created by lack of confidence between Employers and Workmen, and that this lack of confidence has been caused by ignorance on both sides of the paramount necessity for consideration of each other's welfare. It is therefore only by pursuing deliberately a policy

of an opposite character that the "way out" is to be found.

This matter is already under consideration. We believe that there is, on the part of the Employers of to-day, and of the men who represent the great majority of working men, both the mutual confidence, in a personal sense, the courage and the determination to grasp the issue in the right spirit, and to create, firstly, a new relationship; secondly, the necessary organization to give it full effect.

It is not for us, but for these representatives, to pronounce upon the details of such an organization. Men whose theories of social and industrial regeneration in the future differ in every respect should combine for this purpose, as many are now doing on Whitley Councils and in the National Alliance of Employers and Employed.

Industrialists, whether they believe in Nationalization, or consider private ownership as sacred as the British Constitution, are equally concerned with the welfare of Industry at the present time. Only extremists on either hand will deny this.

All others recognize that by united action alone can the safety of Industry be secured, and any assurance be obtained of its prosperity and future stability.

In conclusion we would again quote the writer in *The Round Table.*

"This may seem an optimistic dream. But, in a dispassionate survey, is there any other way? We cannot attain it (Industrial security) by going on as we are. We cannot attain it by revolutionary and socialistic panaceas. Is there any other road than the old one, of substituting friendship for hatred, co-operation for autocracy or conflict, sharing and fair-play for greed and callousness, ending in hard work, efficiency and good-will, in supplying our own and one another's needs, and when we tread this road shall we not find that it is leading in truth to the very

goal of social happiness and national peace which we have all had in view ? "

The answers to these questions are for the men of Industry and for public opinion to give. But one thing is certain. If this road is followed in this spirit of good-will, the Weapon of the Strike will presently rust in the scabbard, and will be gazed at by our children with the antiquarian interest with which the man of the twentieth century views the battle-axe or broadsword of his ancestors.

THE END

Appendix A

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Appendix B

THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED

The Alliance was founded in December, 1916, as a result of conferences between employers, Trade Union leaders and public men on the measures to be taken for the re-instatement in civil employment of men serving in the Forces and in munition works during the War. These conferences began in April, 1915.

The objects of the Alliance are :—

(1) To promote active co-operation of employers and employed in the treatment of questions generally affecting Labour and employment in all trades and industrial occupations.

(2) To promote the welfare of the industrial workers of the country and efficiency of its industries.

Note.—The Alliance will not, unless especially requested to do so, interfere with arrangements existing between Employers' Associations and Trade Unions for the settlement of questions affecting wages, hours and conditions of Labour.

In the first instance, the Alliance consisted mainly of employers and trade unionists, in equal numbers, of national reputation of the staple industries of the country. In 1918 the principles of the Alliance having been approved by Employers' Federations and Trade Unions in a large number of industrial centres, it proceeded to establish joint committees in these areas, and to reconstitute its Central Council and Executive Committee in London upon a representative basis so that the work it carries out, as defined in its objects, and its policy should be directed officially by the great Federations

and Associations of Employers, Trade Unions, Federations of Trade Unions and Trades Councils.

The Alliance has now established (December, 1921) thirty-six joint Committees of employers and delegates from Trade Unions in equal numbers, representing the principal trades of each district. These Committees are represented by two members (an employer and a Trade Unionist) on the Central Council and Executive Committee.

The following table is a summary of the industries represented by local or branch Trade Unions on the Area Committees of the Alliance :—

Class or Craft or Industry.	No. of Branches.		
	1919.	1920.	1921 (to September).
Agriculture	23	50	50
Bakers and Confectioners	14	20	49
Boots, Shoes, Leather	21	30	61
Building Trades	86	110	160
Clerical	39	61	92
Coal Mining	16	22	42
Distributive Trades	31	37	57
Engineering	114	161	201
General Workers	89	145	346
Glass Workers	7	8	28
Metal Industries	82	106	156
Printing Trades	28	43	83
Teaching Profession	9	19	49
Textile	43	59	109
Transport (including Railways)	91	125	175
Miscellaneous	30	122	200
Also thirteen Trades and Labour Councils	—	—	260 (approx.)
Totals	723	1,118	2,118

Among the national Associations of Employers represented on the Alliance are :—

The Fine Cotton Spinners Association.
The Association of British Chambers of Commerce.
The Federation of British Industries.
The Central Council for Economic Information.
The National Federation of Iron & Steel Manufacturers.
The Central Landowners' Association.
The Brassfounders' Employers' Association.
The Incorporated Federated Association of Boot and Shoe Manufacturers of Great Britain and Ireland.

The matters which have come under consideration of the Alliance Committees include increased output ; unemployment ; industrial education ; improvements in local transport ; trade boards ; food prices ; industrial training of ex-service men ; local housing ; land cultivation ; arbitration in local disputes ; factory inspection.

The Central Council and Executive Committee, in addition to the work of forming, organizing and enlarging the scope of the Area Committee work, has departments dealing with agricultural organization ; publicity and propaganda ; prevention of unemployment ; the industrial status and organization of women in industry and in domestic service.

The Alliance is engaged, through its Area Committees supervised from headquarters, in a scheme of economic education, which consists of classes at the Universities in important industrial centres of Trade Unionists who undergo a six or nine months' intensive course on elementary economic theory and elocution. These courses are conducted by University lecturers, and are under the control of sub-committees of employers and Trade Unionists of the Alliance Area Committees. The education given is strictly impartial and its object is to fit the students, who are all men working in their several trades, to take up as lecturers in their spare time, the education in economics of the members of their Unions, and others who desire information and training on the subject of industrial economics. This department is conducted by a Director of Economic Education, who also

lectures and arranges addresses to Chambers of Commerce and groups of employers for the same purpose.

The whole purpose of the Alliance is contained in a paragraph in the Report published in 1921, which is as follows :—

"It provides the means of co-operation, mutual confidence and good-will for men who otherwise meet in most cases to dispute matters where their interests are seriously divided. But it does much more. It enables all who desire to lay facts on the economics of industry before their comrades on the other side, to do so in a manner best calculated to convince the rank and file, whether of employers or of Labour, of the weight and truth of these facts."

The National Alliance of Employers and Employed stands for the principle of equality, of comradeship, of good-will and partnership throughout Industry.

Appendix C

STATEMENT FOR MR. A. H. PATERSON, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED, LONDON

By SAMUEL GOMPERS, *President American Federation of Labour.*

In modern industry the all-pervading control which the employers exercise over the material means of production extends to the opportunities for employment. If unchallenged this control gives the employers a similar power over the people who work for wages.

Without the human element in production, without the wealth-producing power of the workers, the material property of the employers become valueless.

For the determination of their rights the workers realize that the only way in which they can adequately meet the employers is to match the organization of the employers' property force with the organization of the workers' wealth-producing force. The trade union is this organized wealth-producing force.

The trade unions are not organized primarily for the purpose of conducting strikes, but rather for the purpose of avoiding them.

The trade unions declare that those who use the tools of production have the right to determine how many hours per day, for what wages, and under what conditions they will use those tools. The anti-trade-union employers declare that they alone shall determine how many hours per day the workers shall use the tools of production, for what wages and under what conditions.

The trade unions undertake to reach an understanding with the employers over these disputed points by direct negotiation between representatives of the unions and representatives of the employers. Collective bargaining is the basic trade-union institution for the adjustment of industrial relations. It is safe to state that the greater part of our improved conditions of labour is secured through collective bargaining—secured without strikes.

All employers recognize the potency of the workers' economic organization. They know the efficiency of the trade unions in securing higher wages, shorter hours, and improved labour conditions generally. Some employers admit the right of the workers to organize for the control of their wealth-creative force. The anti-trade-union employers do not. They ignore the human element in production. They do not willingly forgo the privilege of mastership over the workers. They resent any interference in the operation of their complete organization of the material force of production by a similar organization of the wealth-producing force of the workers.

It sometimes happens that, despite ordinary argument and persuasion, these recalcitrant employers persist in their refusal to admit the right of the workers to organize effectively and deal collectively for the use of their wealth-creative force, refuse to negotiate industrial relations with the representatives of organized labour, refuse to consider the equitable demands of the unions respecting wages, hours, and other fundamental labour conditions.

It is then that the workers strike. By withholding their labour power the wage-earners can bring autocratic employers to an appreciation of the value of the human, wealth-creative element in production. When reason fails, strikes can, and do, put better understanding into the minds of employers and induce them to a proper regard for employés.

In the last analysis it is the exercise of this right to strike—the workers' right to withhold their wealth-producing power for the purpose of securing more desirable labour conditions—that the anti-trade-union employers attack.

They refuse to admit the institution of collective bargaining,

and thus refuse to recognize the right of the wealth-producers to organize their wealth-producing force and use it to meet the organized economic force of the employers in the negotiated settlement of industrial disputes. And in attacking the right to strike they seek to deprive the workers of that form of use of their wealth-creating power.

Not only do the anti-trade-union employers attack the trade unions on the economic field. They carry the fight into the political field and undertake to enact legislation making strikes illegal. They carry the fight into the judicial field and endeavour through the courts to make unlawful both trade unions and strikes as alleged illegal conspiracies. By compulsory arbitration laws and industrial courts they attempt to take away from the workers the right to withhold their labour power—a right which is the final defensive of the workers and that which distinguishes them from slaves.

Since the close of the world-war the anti-trade-union employers in the United States have been engaged in this sort of a nation-wide offensive to destroy our trade unions and deprive the workers of the right to strike. They have used all their heavy artillery. They have brought into action their economic force, their political force, their judicial force. They have mobilized the employer Press to inflame public opinion through misrepresentation.

They have done all this, but they have completely failed in their war against the trade unions.

The trade unions have rallied to a man to resist any and all encroachments on their fundamental rights. After three years of this anti-trade-union employers' war against organized labour and its liberty-seeking principles, purposes and methods, the unions are animated with an unparalleled spirit of fighting solidarity and aggressiveness.

Our object is industrial freedom.

The right to strike is the workers' last resort against industrial oppression. It is a right that we shall continue to defend to the uttermost.

Appendix D

NATIONAL CIVIC FEDERATION

United States of America

This Federation was founded in 1900. It is composed of leading employers, trade unionists and members of the general public in the United States. Its principles of representation are carried out by the composition of its Executive Committee, which consists of nineteen employers, fourteen Labour representatives and fifteen distinguished persons outside the ranks of industry. The President of the Federation is Judge Alton B. Parker; the Vice-President, Mr. Samuel Gompers. The Federation is directed by its founder and Chairman of its Executive Council, Mr. Ralph M. Easley.

The chief work of the Federation has been the holding of national conferences, and the appointment of Commissions to inquire into and report upon Trusts and Combinations, Immigration, Naturalization, Taxation, Education, etc. The Federation has sent Commissions to Europe to study such questions as Compulsory Insurance and industrial legislation generally, on which it has issued and published Reports. It has investigated social problems such as the relation between prostitution and low wages paid to women. The comparative merits of municipal and private ownership of public utility service in America and Europe have been studied by the Federation. During the War the Federation organized a "League for National Unity" composed of representatives of thirty national organizations which took action to counteract "pacifist and German propaganda."

The Federation is now engaged, through departmental

Committees, in dealing with industrial welfare, the study and condemnation of revolutionary movements, workmen's compensation, public health, education, and industrial training.

The Federation is, of course, a strictly non-political body. Its main object would appear to be to arouse in members of the public of the United States, especially those in the industrial community, a fuller sense of their responsibility and influence as citizens of their great Republic.

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